VOICES OF THE SPIRIT

REV. G. MATHESON M.A., D.D.

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VOICES OF THE SPIRIT.

BY

GEORGE MATHESON, M.A., D.D.

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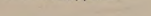

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PREFACE.

THIS book is offered to the religious public as an attempt to aid the moments of devotional life. I do not believe however that moments of devotion are moments of mental vacancy; the wings on which the spirit soars must always be wings of thought. Therefore in every one of these meditations I have tried to express a distinct idea. I have endeavoured to exhibit in their fulness and in their variety the different phases of the spiritual life and the different emotions which are awakened by them. I have not sought out these phases; I have allowed them to find *me*. I have come to the task with no previous system in my mind; I have just walked beside the stream and taken my impressions from its windings. The stream by which I have walked is the Bible. I have followed in the order of our books from Genesis

to Revelation the track of those influences which are attributed to the Divine Spirit, and have endeavoured to photograph them in the light of devotion. If as the result of the whole the Christian life has been revealed in a multiplicity of aspects which has constituted an appeal to many and varied minds, the effect must be credited to the photograph and not to the photographer; I have only recorded what I have found. If but one of those many and varied minds to whom this book would seek to appeal shall find in its pages some moment of help or strength or joy, I shall not think it has been written wholly in vain.

GEORGE MATHESON.

St Bernard's, Edinburgh.

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I.

The Precedence of the Spirit.

"The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters."
—GEN. i. 2.

BEFORE God said "Let there be light," He said "Let there be Spirit." It was the key-note of all His voices to the human soul. It is no use to bring the light until you have brought the Spirit. Light will not make the waters of life glad unless the spirit of joy has already moved them. Light is only outward and the joy of the soul has its seat within. It is in vain you promise me the herb of the field and the bird of the air and the fish of the sea. It is in vain even that you bring me into contact with my fellow-men made in the image of God. If the Spirit has not moved on the face of the waters there can be no gladness in *my* face. That which makes me glad is not what I get but what I am, and what I am depends on the Spirit. Therefore it was well that the Spirit should come before all His gifts—before the light, before the firmament, before the herb

of the field. It was well that the joy in the heart should precede the joy in the universe. It was well that ere the light could rise, the Spirit should move on the face of the waters.

O Thou Divine Spirit whose breath preceded all things, I am seeking to invert the order of Thy work. I am asking for other things before Thee. I am crying for light, for sun and moon and star, for the green herb, for the bird of heaven. I am forgetting that without Thee the light would not charm, the grass would not grow, the bird would not sing. Come Thyself first of all and move upon the face of the waters. Come and give to the light its charm, to the herb its greenness, to the bird its song. Come and let me see the image of God in my brother-man, that I may learn to love him as my other self and in the joy of love may find universal joy. Without Thee the days of my creation are evenings without mornings; the nightless Sabbath shall have dawned when Thou shalt move upon the waters.

II.

The Hope of the Spirit.

"My Spirit shall not always strive with man."—GEN. vi. 3.

NO, not always; there shall be peace at the last. It is not possible that there can be two eternal powers; one must conquer and be all in all. Shall it be the flesh or shall it be the Spirit? The deluge shall answer that question. All flesh shall be destroyed; all carnality shall be drowned; all worldly lust shall be buried in the waves and love shall reign supreme. O glorious prophecy, thou redeemest the darkness of the flood. Thou art already the dove upon the waters, but thou tellest of a higher rest than that of Ararat. Thou tellest of a time when there shall be no more sea, no more passion, no more sin. Thou tellest of summers without storm, of mornings without cloud, of moments without fear. Thou art better than the rainbow set for a covenant amid the waters. *That* only promised a freedom from future punishment; thine is the pledge of a freedom from future sin. Thy pledge shall be

redeemed when the vision of Patmos shall be fulfilled: "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ."

Spirit Divine, why is it that I am at war with Thee? Nothing else is at war with Thee. We speak of the *laws* of nature and we do well. All nature is Thy law and keeps Thy law; this heart of mine has alone refused to say "Thy will be done." I am myself the miracle of the universe, the violation of the order of nature. I am the only thing in creation which strives with Thee, which needs to be reconciled to Thee. They say that to believe in Thee is to believe in that which contradicts reason; no, it is to find something which destroys the contradiction. I am *now* the contradiction to reason, the miracle in nature, the one exception to the reign of universal law. Spirit of Christ, Spirit of the heavenly Father, conquer my will, that the miracle may be destroyed. Reconcile my heart to Thy heart, that there may be no more violation of law. Unite my purpose to Thy purpose, that I may be in harmony with all things and that all things may work together for my good. Let me know for the first time the joy of being no anomaly in the universe of life, no interruption in the order of nature. All things shall be subject unto Thee when I have ceased to strive.

III.

The Practicalness of the Spirit.

"And Pharaoh said unto his servants, Can we find such a one as this is, a man n whom the Spirit of God is?"—GEN. xli. 38.

NE would have thought the fact would have been a disqualification in the eyes of Pharaoh. Pharaoh was a worldling; how could he respect that which was unworldly? All his motives were guided by the interests of the hour, how could he welcome a man who belonged to the immensities and eternities? It is because eternity includes the present hour, and He who has the spirit of eternity has also the spirit of the time. Think you that an atheist master would consent to have an atheist servant? Nay, he would know that the temporal work would not be well done. He who would do well the temporal work must be beyond the time. No man can steer his way through the ocean of life whose eye is not on the stars. Wouldst thou be fit for thy service? then must thou be higher than thy service. Life would be too much for thee if thou didst not see ahead of it;

thou art saved by hope. Thou canst not be a man of the world without a balanced mind, and a balanced mind is a mind at peace. God's peace is not something to die with; it is something to live by. Without it thou art but half a man—unfit for Egypt, unfit for Pharaoh, unfit for the coming famine. *With* it, thou art more a man of the time than those who call themselves abreast of the age; he who would be abreast of the age must already have outrun it, for the world that now is, is lighted by the world to come.

Spirit of Christ, fit me for the earth on which I dwell. I used to ask that Thou wouldst prepare me for *death;* Thy main province is to prepare me for life. I used to pray that Thou wouldst make me ready for the things that are unseen and eternal; Thy summer is the ripeness for the things that are seen and temporal. I am growing more impressed with the solemnity of living than of dying. I am growing more impressed with the need of Thee in things common than in things transcendental. I am in want of Thee not to help me *out* of the world but to help me *in* the world. I need Thee both for the seven years of plenty and for the seven years of famine. Without Thee I cannot bear either the one or the other. Be Thou my pillar of cloud by day; be Thou my pillar of fire by night. Teach me my

nothingness in the hour of my prosperity; tell me in my adversity that I am something to Thee. Redeem from dust alike my evenings and my mornings that I may claim as Thy gifts not only angels and principalities but the world and life as well. The day of common work shall be the Lord's day, when I can say like the man of Patmos, "I was in the Spirit."

IV.

The Condescension of the Spirit.

"I have filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, to devise cunning works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass."
—EXOD. xxxi. 3-4.

HAT! for so base a purpose as that? To fill a man with the Spirit for the sake of devising cunning works, to inspire him with wisdom and with understanding and with all knowledge for no other end than that he may work in brass and iron—it seems a most lame and impotent conclusion. I could understand a man being inspired to teach, I could understand him being inspired to prophesy, I could understand him being inspired to live a life of unworldliness; but to fill him with the Spirit for the sake of life's common round, to inspire him with a view to perform duties seemingly the most menial and the most undivine, is not this a degradation of the fountain of living waters? No; it is an elevation. The glory of every spirit is its power to manifest itself

in the smallest things. When is the poet a perfect poet? It is when he can weave the spirit of beauty into everything, get sermons from stones and books from the running brooks. Even so is it with Thy Spirit, O my God. Its triumph is its lowest sphere—its shining before men. It is never so manifested as when it appears in its seeming opposite. The heavenly treasure never proves its omnipotence so strongly as when it lies in the earthen vessel; it is beauty revealed in deformity, it is peace subsisting in storm, it is strength perfected in weakness, it is life manifested in death.

Spirit of Christ, Spirit that hast incarnated Thyself in the brass and iron of this world, I come to Thee. Unto whom can I go but unto Thee to find that which I need? That which I need is not seclusion from the world; if it were, the spirit of the Brahman would suffice. It is power to work *in* the world, strength to serve in the duties of the common day. Therefore, Thou Spirit of the Incarnation, inspire me for the labours of the flesh. Quicken me for the toils of dusty lane and bustling mart. Nerve me for the troubles of the exchange, the counting-house, and the workshop. Fit me to bear the crosses and the losses that await the dealings between man and man. Help me to consecrate my gains to the service of love, to the lifting of

humanity, to the setting at liberty of those that are bound. So shall I make friends of the Mammon of unrighteousness, so shall I claim for Thee what the world has claimed for its own. The incarnation of Christ shall be completed when Thou hast filled the brass, the silver, and the gold.

V.

The Medium of the Spirit.

"The Lord came down in a cloud, and spake unto him, and took of the Spirit that was upon him, and gave it unto the seventy elders."—NUMBERS xi. 25.

GOD often speaks to me in a cloud—reveals Himself through that which seems an absence of revelation. The hour of sorrow becomes my hour of communion, and the silence of earth is vocal with songs of heaven. But the great advantage of my cloud is that it breaks my solitude. It seems beforehand to be a source of solitude. It threatens to be something which will hide me from the eyes of my brother man and drive me within the temple of my own soul. In reality it has the opposite effect. The message which comes to me through the cloud, comes to me as a message for humanity. It first clothes me in the spirit of peace, and then it takes the spirit it has put upon me, and puts it on my fellow-

labourers. It enables me to feel that I have one common burden with those who work by my side. It tells me that I am never so little alone, never so near to the mass of mankind, as under the shadow of the night. We do not all meet under the sunbeam, but we all meet under the cloud. The cloud is the true conductor of the electric spark of love. It carries my life into your life, my thought into your thought, my heart into your heart. It finds an entrance through the walls which prosperity has reared between man and man and unites the soul of David to the soul of Jonathan.

Son of Man, let Thy cross be my medium of human brotherhood. Under the shadow of Thy cloud let me meet face to face with the soul of my fellow-man. May we be bound together in the unity of Thy Spirit—the spirit of sacrifice, the spirit of self-surrendering love. May we be united by the fellowship of the mystery—the mystery of suffering. We have failed to be united by the fellowship of prosperity, the participation in a common joy. Join us by Thy cross, O Son of Man; unite us by Thy sacrifice; connect us by Thy cloud. Bring our hearts into sympathy by the contact of a kindred experience, by the touch of a common cross, by the pain of a united martyrdom. Let us walk through the furnace not one by one but three by

three and seeing ever the form of a fourth in the likeness of Thyself. It shall be worth while to have met Thee in the cloud if the spirit which Thou there shalt give me shall be the spirit of humanity.

VI.

The Secret of the Spirit's Revelation.

"And it came to pass, that, when the Spirit rested upon them, they prophesied."—NUMB. xi. 25.

WHEN the Spirit rested upon them they prophesied;" spiritual rest was mental activity. It is ever so. My times of revelation are not my times of mental flutter. "Be still, and know that I am God," is the law of spiritual insight. Why did the Son of man see heaven opened and hear its voice of commendation? It was because the Spirit was "*abiding* upon Him." It was not a momentary flash, it was not a sudden ebulition, it was not an excited rhapsody; it was the conviction of a dove-like calm. There are a hundred things lying at my feet which I cannot see for want of calmness—want of the dove-like rest. Why is Hagar in such distress in the desert? There is a well of water before her very eyes if she would only look at it. But she cannot look at

it. It is not want of sight that prevents her from seeing it; it is want of spiritual rest. If she were only calm she would get a revelation, a revelation that has been waiting for her a long time, written on the desert sands. But she is not calm. Her heart is on fire, her nerves are in motion, her soul is ill at ease. She is a stranger to spiritual rest, and therefore she is a stranger to the actual outward comforts that are scattered at her door. When the Spirit has rested on her she will prophesy her own deliverance.

Spirit of rest, in Thy light we shall see light. In the absence of Thy light even our sunshine is darkness. Is it not written that in order to give a knowledge of the glorious light in the face of Jesus Christ, Thou hadst to shine "in our *hearts?*" If even the face of Christ could only have its glory seen through Thine inward shining, what shall we say of the face of the universe? I am like Elijah under the shadows of Horeb; I underrate the number of my own sunbeams. It is stillness that I want most of all—power to stand and gaze on my actual surroundings. I am more disturbed by the earthquake than either by the thunder or by the fire. Speak peace to my soul, that I may awake to the melodies that float around me. Speak peace to my soul, that in the hour of its rest I

may see the ladder between earth and heaven. I shall know that there are yet seven thousand who have not bowed the knee to Baal when Thou hast inspired my spirit with Thy still small voice.

VII.

The Secular influences of the Spirit.

"And when they came thither to the hill, behold a company of prophets met him (Saul); and the Spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied among them."—1 SAM. x. 10.

HEN they were come thither to the hill, a company of prophets met him." There were then two influences under which the Spirit of God came to him—the influence of outward nature, and the influence of human brotherhood. Might not the Spirit have dispensed with these aids? What had the vicinity of the hill, what had the company of the prophets to do with the mighty breath of God's Spirit? Does the Spirit need the help of such poor allies as a physical scene and a human soul? No; it does not *need* the help, but it takes it. The Spirit uses many aids which it does not require; it loves to work through sacraments. It consecrates the hill-top and makes the traveller a worshipper; it consecrates a human companionship and makes the social hour an hour in the

temple of God. It is not the hill-top that sanctifies, it is not the human voice that transforms. The scene that melts you to-day was perhaps unheeded yesterday; the words that struck home at night were perhaps powerless in the morning. God chooses His own sacraments, and He chooses His own objects to make sacramental. Only, be thou ready, be thou reverent, for, the hill that to-day is commonplace may to-morrow be inspiring, and the words which the morning despised may at evening time be thy light.

Spirit of Christ, consecrate the scenes amidst which I move. Consecrate the lonely hill-top where my soul communes with nature; consecrate the crowded thoroughfare where I meet the company of my fellow-men. Thou art not confined to temples made with hands, nor art Thou limited to the sacrament of bread and wine. Reveal to me the holiness of common things. Teach me the sacredness of what I call secular. Show me the sacramental glory of the lily of the field. Open mine eyes to the divine wonder of that universe whose miracles I have forgotten. Tell me again that the heavens declare Thy glory, that the earth is full of Thy goodness, that the tempest itself is the echo of Thy voice. Tell me above all that Thy voice speaks to me through the heart of my brother man, that Thou sendest now

Thy messages not by angels but by human souls. My whole life shall be a sacrament when Thou shalt meet me alike in the company and on the hill.

VIII.

The Anger of the Spirit.

"And the Spirit of God came upon Saul when he heard those tidings, and his anger was kindled greatly."—1 SAM. xi. 6.

WHAT a strange effect of the Spirit! I would have looked for anything but that. I thought the Spirit of Christ meant love; here I am told that its mission was to create anger. Yes, but have you never heard of an anger which is compatible with love? Have you never read of "the wrath of the Lamb"? Think you that the Lamb had lost the Divine Spirit when He burst into wrath? Nay, it was the presence of that Spirit that gave Him His wrath. There is an anger which is human, and there is an anger which is Divine. Human anger resents the *hurt;* Divine anger resents the *wrong.* Human anger is wounded in its *pride;* Divine anger is wounded in its *heart.* Human anger laments the injury to self; Divine anger laments the injury to God. Human anger cries out for revenge; Divine anger cries out for atonement.

Spirit of Christ, who hast come to consecrate my whole human nature, consecrate my anger too. Thou art not come to destroy but to fulfil. Thou art not sent to mutilate my present powers but to redeem them from mutilation. There are times in which I do well to be angry, but I have mistaken these times. I am angry at the gourd because it withers; I should be angry with the *cause* of its withering. I am eager to revenge an individual offence, but I am regardless of the principle from which the offence springs. Create within me Thine own Divine horror of that which blights the gourd. Inspire me with that "love of love" which implies "the scorn of scorn and the hate of hate." Rouse me into that groaning of the spirit whose tears are born not of weakness but of holy passion—the passion against malice and hatred and envy and all uncharitableness. Wake me into sympathy with that fiery zeal which burned with indignation to see life's temple desecrated. The passions of my heart belong now to the Mammon of unrighteousness; transport them into the service of righteousness, and they shall become Thy friends. When Thy fire shall baptize my soul I shall know what it is to "be angry, and sin not."

IX.

The Dangers of the Spirit.

"Lest peradventure the Spirit of the Lord hath taken him up, and cast him upon some mountain or into some valley."
—2 KINGS ii. 16.

STRANGE that such dangers should be attributed to the possession of God's Spirit. And yet the dangers are true. The man who has got the Spirit has to beware of two extremes—the mountain and the valley. He may be lifted up to such a height of ecstasy as to become unpractical; he may be cast down into such a depth of self-abasement as to become morbid. A man without the Spirit is in neither of these dangers; he has neither the sight of the divine to elevate nor the contrast of the human to depress; it is easy for *him* to keep on the plain. But the man of the Spirit has like Paul both his third heaven and his thorn. He may be exalted above measure or he may be sunk in depths that are fathomless; he may forget the actual perils of the way or he may cry in the bitterness of his soul, "O wretched man that I am!"

Spirit of Christ, let Thy chariot of fire lift me above both the valley and the mountain. In Thee alone shall I find the refuge from Thine own dangers. It is my little knowledge of Thee that is a dangerous thing. If my flight were only higher I would be in no fear from either the mountain or the valley. Both would dwindle into insignificance before the contemplation of a heavenly glory. I would cease to think of myself either joyously or despondently; I would lose myself in the brightness of Thy sunshine. I would be independent of the variations of my feeling — alike of my exaltation and of my despair; viewed from the height of Thy heaven my mountain of pride and my valley of tears would look equally small. Therefore, Thou Spirit, lift me from the partial into the full knowledge of Thyself. Lift me high enough to lose sight of all but Thee. Lift me so near to heaven that I shall forget to measure the heights and depths of earth. Raise me so close into communion with Thyself, that I shall be unable any longer to commune with *my*self, that my lights and my shadows alike shall pale before Thy splendour. When I have reached Thy fulness I shall reach Thy peace; when I have entered Thy chariot of fire I shall steer the middle way between the mountain and the vale.

X.

The Courage of the Spirit.

"Then the Spirit came upon Amasa, who was chief of the captains, and he said, Thine are we, David, and on thy side, thou son of Jesse: peace, peace be unto thee, and peace be to thine helpers; for thy God helpeth thee. Then David received them, and made them captains of the band."—1 CHRON. xii. 18.

THERE is something very remarkable here. The Spirit of God comes upon a soldier in the moment of his enlistment, comes upon him that he may be *helped* to enlist. Why not! The only thing which justifies any man in being brave is the motive of the Spirit. The motive of the Spirit is a feeling that a cause is just. There is a courage which belongs to the beast of the field—the courage of recklessness which knows not life's value; that is not the motive of the Spirit. But there is another courage which is consistent with the love of life, and therefore consistent with fear; it is the courage of duty. That alone is the garb for the soldier;

that alone is the gift of the Spirit. It is no virtue to be brave if you are weary of life; it is no heroism to be courageous if you are a stranger to human ties. But if you deem life precious, if you hold ties dear, then it costs something to be brave—costs what only the Spirit of God can pay; nothing but the sense of duty can make the good man a soldier.

Spirit of Christ, who of old didst make men soldiers for the times of war, make me now a soldier for the times of peace. The days of war are ended and the days of peace are come, but we cannot disband our soldiers; our citizens must now all be soldiers. Give me for the city those same qualities which Thou wert wont to give for the camp; I need them for the city more than for the camp. Give me the soldier's discipline, the soldier's fortitude, the soldier's chivalry, the soldier's sacrifice. Nerve me for the battle of peace, more hard than the battle of war. Nerve me for the trials of the market-place, more arduous than the marches of the field. Nerve me, not by drugging my sensibilities, but by giving me a new sense—the perfected sense of duty. Make me brave, not by lessening but by intensifying my conviction of life's glory. Make me strong, not with the strength of recklessness, but with that strength which comes from an increased burden of care. Inspire me

with Thy sacrificial love, and I shall be a stranger to selfish fear; I shall have the courage to dare all things when I am made a captain in Thy band.

XI.

The Beauty of the Spirit.

"The pattern of all that he had by the Spirit, of the courts of the house of the Lord."—1 CHRON. xxviii. 12.

WHAT! could the Spirit condescend to such a gift as that? Could it stoop so low as to inspire a man with the imagination of an architect? Why not? Is not the Spirit of God the spirit of beauty? Was it not the inspirer of beauty before it became the inspirer of goodness? Did not the heavens declare its glory and the firmament show forth its handiwork ere ever it had breathed into man the breath of its Divine life? Why was there chaos before the Spirit moved if beauty be not a gift of the Spirit? Why, when the Spirit moved, did God say, "Let there be light," if the vision of material glory be alien to the life divine? Say not that matter is vile, say not that beauty is sensuous, say not that the forms of earth are the antithesis of the kingdom

of God. There is a room within thy heart which God has dedicated to the beautiful; thou callest it the imagination. Let the Spirit furnish that room. Let it say to this inner chamber, "Let there be light," "Let there be a firmament," let there be herb and plant and tree. Let it hang upon the walls the brightest and fairest forms — forms too bright and fair ever to be seen below. So shalt thou know that thy imagination had its birth in heaven, that the fountain of the stream of beauty has its home above.

Spirit of Christ, Spirit of the "altogether lovely," in Thee alone is realised my ideal of the beautiful. There are patterns hung up in my heart to which I can find nothing outside that answers. The light within my soul is a light that never shone on sea or land. All attempts to copy it are vain. There are spots in every sunbeam, there are thorns in every rose, there are crosses in every life. I have never seen the perfect landscape, I have never beheld the cloudless day. I have never looked upon the faultless human soul. Never till I found *Thee*. But Thou hast answered to the pattern in my heart, Thou hast realised the ideal in my spirit. Thou art the spotless sunbeam, Thou art the thornless rose, Thou art the cloudless day, Thou art the faultless life. My imagination cannot transcend

Thee; though I shut my eyes a hundred times, I can fancy nothing more beautiful. In the vision of Thee I have received the fulfilment of my dream; Thou hast realised my pattern for the courts of the house of the Lord.

XII.

The Prosperity of the Spirit.

"And the Spirit of God came upon Azariah the son of Oded: and he went out to meet Asa, and said unto him, Hear ye me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin; The Lord is with you, while ye be with Him."—2 CHRON. XV. 1–2.

I THOUGHT inspiration was the revelation of something *new*. I thought it should tell us something nobody knew before. Why then send the Spirit to a man to utter such a truism as this, "The Lord is with you, while ye be with Him?" It is because these words are only a truism to him who has received the Spirit. He who has not received the Spirit would deem them the wildest paradox. He would look at the men of God, and say, "Where is to them the promise of His coming?" He would say to the Son of man, "Come down from the *cross* and we will believe in Thee." He would ask if the favour of God was consistent with being mocked, and scourged, and crucified, with being despised and rejected of men, with having not where to lay the weary

head. *We* know that it *is* consistent, but why? Because we have the fruits of the Spirit. We have learned by Christian experience that the valley may be exalted, that the crooked may be made straight, and the rough places plain. We have learned by Christian experience that there is a peace which passeth understanding, which the world cannot give and never can take away. But that knowledge is itself a gift of the Spirit. Is it not written, "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him"? To all outside it *is* a secret. A song in the night, a stream in the desert, a light in the valley, a rainbow in the flood—these are not the truisms of the natural mind. Inspiration alone can reveal the prosperity of the soul; the Spirit alone can tell us that God is with us while we are with Him.

Spirit of Christ, only in Thy inspiration can I know that the righteous prosper. Seen in the light of the world, those that are with Thee appear to have the worst of it. But the light of the world cannot reveal the glories of Gethsemane. It can disclose the sweatdrops and the tears and the darkness. It can reveal the suppliant pouring forth His petition with the voice of strong crying. It can show that the prayer is seemingly unanswered, and the passing of the cup denied. But it cannot disclose the peace that comes *with* the cup. It cannot

detect the angel of strength that follows the surrendered will. It cannot photograph the rod and the staff that even in the valley of the shadow enable a man to say, "Thou art with me." Create Thyself that sublime vision, O Spirit of the Cross. Usher me into the joy of my Lord—the joy that could speak of its fulness at the very foot of Calvary. Inspire me with the peace which is independent of circumstances, which in the hour of death can say, "Let not your heart be troubled." Then and not till then shall the paradox become a truism, then and not till then shall I understand the promise, "The Lord is with you, while ye be with Him."

XIII.

The Sustenance of the Spirit.

"Thou gavest also Thy good Spirit to instruct them, and withheldest not Thy manna from their mouth, and gavest them water for their thirst."—NEH. ix. 20.

OD is said to have sustained Israel by the Spirit first and by the manna afterwards. We should have looked for the reverse order. We should have thought that the care of the Heavenly Father would have begun by strengthening the *gates* and then proceeded to strengthen the citadel. But the Heavenly Father knows better what is *in* man. He knows that no amount of manna will permanently quell hunger as long as there is a hunger of the spirit. It is in vain to provide a couch of down if there is an unrest within the *heart*. It is in vain to supply strains of music if there is a discord in the soul. It is in vain to spread the banquet if there is a burden on the spirit. But if the heart be already rested it will find peace everywhere, if the soul be already tuned it will find music everywhere, if

the spirit be already fed, it will find a banquet everywhere. Israel's own glory was not her manna but her mind; it was her mind that sustained her in the poverty of her manna. Not without cause does the prophet thank God for this, that His first boon to Israel was the gift of the good Spirit.

O Thou who hast taught us to seek first Thy kingdom and its righteousness, teach me to say "Thy will be done" before I say "give me my daily bread." Teach me to accept Thy will as the foundation of my happiness, and other things as only its superstructure. Teach me that the mandate that says to my soul "thy sins be forgiven thee" is a more abiding miracle than the mandate which says to my body "arise and walk." I am often disappointed that Thou promisest so much more to the spirit than to the flesh. I am more afraid of the hunger of the body than of the hunger of the spirit, more anxious for the strength of the outer man than for the health of the heart. Convince me that it would not profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his own soul. Show me that it is only the possession of my soul that makes the possession of the world any gain. Impress me with the truth that no *thing* can give me joy if I myself am not already joyful. Inspire me with the knowledge that the issues of life are

not from without but from within. Guide me into the discovery that the pleasures at Thy right hand are the only things that are "pleasures *for evermore.*" He that tasteth the earthly manna shall hunger again, but he that has received Thy bread of life shall subsist even amidst its failure. In Thy new creation that must be first which is spiritual, afterward that which is natural. Before Thou sendest the manna give me Thy good Spirit.

XIV.

The Chastisement of the Spirit.

"Yet many years didst Thou forbear them, and testifiedst agai st them by Thy Spirit."—NEH. ix. 30.

IS there not something strangely incongruous here? God's Spirit is said at one and the same time both to bear with man and to testify against him. How can these two attitudes be reconciled? Can the Spirit bear with me at the very moment when it is uttering an adverse testimony? Yes it can; its adverse testimony may be itself the proof of its forbearance. There is a chastisement which proves that I am carried in the bosom of the Father; it is the pain of conscience. I am often distressed by the adverse testimony of my conscience; it seems to say that I have been cast out from the presence of the Lord. In truth what it says is the contrary; it tells me that I am getting nearer to the *heart* of the Father. When I was far away I was unconscious of my distance, but now as I draw near, the distance seems illimitable. Before the

Spirit came I had perfect peace—the peace of the stagnant lake, the peace of the Dead Sea. But now that the Spirit has come, the lake has become a waving ocean and the Dead Sea is ruffled with storms. It is the increase of life that has brought the waves; it is the breath of the Spirit that has stirred the face of the waters. It is the dawn of day that has revealed my darkness; it is the sight of the Delectable Mountains that makes the mountains of earth seem small; it is the vision of the Son of man that has caused me to abhor the shadow of myself.

Spirit of Christ, teach me the prophecy of glory that lies in my own unrest. Reveal to me the promise of love that is hid in the rebuke of a heavenly Father. When I am oppressed by the weight of conscience, tell me that the weight which oppresses me is the burden of a Father's care. When I am appalled by the impurities of my past life, tell me that the eye which reads the impurity has received its light from Thee. When I am overwhelmed with the conviction that I am growing more sinful day by day, tell me that the breath which dims the mirror is Thy breath—the breath that makes my dust a living soul. When I stand afar off and beat upon my breast and say "Unclean, unclean," tell me that this is the time in which I go down to my house justified. Thou never

lovest me more than when Thou chidest, Thou never holdest me dearer than when Thou chastisest. Thou hidest the heart of Calvary beneath the armour of Sinai; when Thou testifiest against me I know that Thou art bearing with me.

XV.

The Gospel of the Spirit in Nature.

"By His Spirit He hath garnished the heavens."—Job xxvi. 13.

THE heavens are garnished by the Spirit of the Son of man—the Spirit of the Cross. The beauty of the heavens is the beauty of sacrifice. Nothing shines by its own light. The radiance of everything is a borrowed radiance; all things live by the life of others. One star differeth from another star in glory, yet the one cannot say to the other, "I have no need of thee." The universe depends on each one as much as each one depends on the universe. If one of the least of these should perish there would be a crash of all worlds. What is that law which I call gravitation but the sign of the Son of man in heaven. It is the gospel of self-surrender in nature. It is the inability of any world to be its own centre, the necessity of every world to centre in something else. The eyes of all wait upon the Father, and He gives them

their meat in due season, but He takes care that it is not the interest of any to receive its bread alone. The Power that has garnished the heavens is the Spirit of Him whose many members constitute one body.

O Thou that tellest the number of the stars, help me to realise that Thou callest them all by Thy name—the name that is above every name. Help me to see in the unity of the starry heavens a picture of that higher unity—our membership in Thee. I speak of the heavens declaring Thy glory; what do I mean by that? What is Thy glory? Is it the splendour of lights and the blending of colours? Is it the flashing of comets and the radiance of suns? Is it the vastness of spaces and the immeasurableness of distances? All this is but a mechanician's glory. Thou art a Spirit, and Thy glory must be the glory of a Spirit. The glory of a Spirit is sacrifice, and it is by telling of sacrifice that the heavens declare Thy glory. When I look up at the stars, it sometimes seems as if Thy gospel were a contradiction to nature; I say "What is man that Thou art mindful of him?" Teach me that these stars are themselves the promise of Thy mindfulness. Teach me that the heavens themselves declare the wonders of the Cross. Inspire me with the thought that the beauty which I see in nature is the same beauty which

I behold in Calvary. Reveal to me that, alike in the firmament as on the earth, the many are made one by giving the one for the many; so shall I know that it is Thy *Spirit* that has garnished the heavens.

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XVI.

The Heredity of the Spirit.

"The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life."—JOB xxxiii. 4.

EVERY man ought to be proud of a good ancestry—of an ancestry whose characteristic was goodness. The value lies not in the origin, but in the heredity. The qualities of my ancestors would be nothing if they did not tend to be transmitted; it is the present and not the past that gives them weight. Our life is always the breath of the spirit which has made us; the traits of the fathers re-appear in the children. On one side we have all a splendid ancestry. On the side of our Mother Nature we have much to bear; we are children of the flesh, and the flesh is weak. But we have also an origin from our *Father*, and our Father is a Spirit. We have an ancestry which goes back beyond Nature, beyond maternity, beyond the flesh. We have a pedigree which is older than the mountains, older than the stars, older than the universe. We are come from a

good stock; we are branches of a high family tree; we are scions of a noble house, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Nature is the parent of our flesh, but the Divine is the Father of our spirits; the Spirit of God has made us, and the breath of the Almighty has given us life.

My soul, hast thou within thyself the traces of thy heavenly origin? It is not enough that thou canst prove it from a register book; there is nothing to be proud of in any ancestry which is not *in* thee. It is not enough to quote a text of the Bible in proof of thy Divine descent; if thy lineage be of any value, that which descends to thee must be not a text but a quality. Hast thou within thyself the qualities of thy Father? Canst thou point to aught in thy being which never could have come to thee from thy Mother Nature? Hast thou moments higher than the physical—moments of faith, of aspiration, of love, of prayer? Hast thou times in which the kingdoms of this world have no glory by reason of an all-excelling glory? Hast thou glimpses from the summit of Nebo in which thy youth is renewed like the eagle's, in which thine eye ceases to be dim, and thy natural strength is still unabated? Then thou hast a prophecy of immortality, and thy prophecy is a memory. The premonition of thy future is the voice of thy

past. The promise of thy destiny is the echo of thy origin. Thou canst not rise too high for thy source; thou shalt go to God because thou hast come from God. Thy hope of everlastingness is the knowledge that thy life is the breath of the Almighty, and thy life is the breath of the Almighty because the Spirit of God has made thee.

XVII.

The Worldly Necessity of the Spirit.

"If He gather unto Himself His Spirit and His breath; all flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again unto dust."

—Job xxxiv. 14, 15.

IS it so! I never knew that man was so dependent on the Spirit of God. I always knew indeed that the Spirit was necessary to man's *salvation*, but it never occurred to me that it was required even to keep up the flesh. I understood well enough that its removal would shut out a man from the other world, but I never thought that its removal would make it impossible to live in this. Yet this is what the Bible says. It tells me that the Divine Spirit is necessary even to the life of the human. It tells me that if the Spirit of God were gathered back to Himself, there would be a simultaneous collapse of the world called secular, that the products of materialism would disappear with the death of spiritualism, that the institutions of earth would fade in the vanishing of the breath of heaven, that in the extinction of grace supreme "all flesh would perish together."

O Thou divine Spirit, life would be unbearable without Thee. The very fact that I am not consumed by the world is a proof that Thou art in the world. I have never seen anything at its worst. Bad men would be infinitely more bad but for Thee. The ship of life is tossing but it is anchored. I often complain of the storm, and say "Verily Thou art a God that hidest Thyself." If Thou didst hide Thyself even for a moment I would know what it is to have a storm. My very complaining shows that the storm is not natural to me, that there is more good than evil in Thy universe. Thou art Thyself the good that outweighs the evil. Thou art the balance of all discords; Thou art the compensation of all losses; Thou art the restraint of all violence; Thou art the limit of all vices. Thou art the oil of every troubled water; Thou art the still small voice of every rolling thunder; Thou art the bow of promise in every threatening cloud. Without Thee we can do nothing even in our own department; only in Thy life does our life become endurable. Abide with us, for our natural strength fades into evening; if Thou take away Thy breath, all flesh shall perish together.

XVIII.

The Luxuries of the Spirit.

"Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation; and uphold me with Thy free Spirit."—Ps. li. 12.

WHEN a man commits sin and is forgiven, he finds the old peace but he does not at once find the old joy, he does not at once regain the old freedom. Jacob wrestles with the angel of his own conscience and prevails, but as he returns from the battle-field he halts upon his thigh. How should it be otherwise? The Divine Spirit like every other spirit is a *habit* of life, and a habit is only acquired by time. If my soul casts off its old habit to-day, it can easily put it on again to-morrow, but it must not expect it to fit so well as it did yesterday. David has slain Uriah, and his conscience has pursued him. He has struggled for pardon, he has wrestled for peace; he has conquered, but he has come back with the shrunk sinew. He has received the forgiveness, he has obtained the blessing, he has paid the exacted penalty, but he misses the old elasticity, he wants the former

joy. He is afraid to put down the foot with the vigour of other years; the breaking of the habit has broken his confidence, and so it has broken his freedom. He has returned in safety from the midnight struggle, but he wants something more than safety: "Restore to me the joy of Thy salvation and uphold me by Thy free Spirit."

My Father, give me back the *luxuries* of Thy Spirit—its freedom and its joy. I am not content with mere pardon; I am not satisfied with bare redemption. I am not comforted with simple salvation; I want the *joy* of salvation. It is not enough that I am at *peace* with Thee, it is not enough that I am reconciled to Thee; I must be able to be glad in Thee. Only in perfect joy shall I find perfect freedom. I would not like to be always in tremor lest by any word I should offend Thee; prayer would die on the threshold of my heart if it were not winged by fearlessness. I shall never lose my fear until I have felt myself akin to Thee, and I shall never feel that kinship until Thy Spirit has come. I shall never meet Thee face to face until Thy will is my will, until I have realised that between Thee and me there exists an equality of soul. I tremble before Thee because I look up to Thee as a master; teach me to feel that I am not a servant but a son. I ask piteously for the crumbs that fall from Thy table; make me to

know that I have a right to the fatted calf and the best ring and the fairest robe. I am speaking of my religious *duties;* inspire me with a sense of my religious privileges, of the ease that comes from living on the lap of luxury. Thy grace shall become my nature when I have reached the *joy* of Thy salvation.

XIX.

The Spirit in the Animal World.

"These wait all upon Thee . . . Thou sendest forth Thy Spirit, they are created."—Ps. civ. 27, 30.

WHO are the "all" here spoken of? They are the living creatures of the whole earth. What! you say, the creatures of the animal world! can *these* be said to be in possession of God's Spirit? I can understand very well how *man* should be thus privileged. I can understand why a being of such nobleness as the human soul should lay claim to a distinctive pre-eminence. But is it not a bold thing to say that the human soul is in contact with the beast of the field? Is it not a degradation of my nature to affirm that the same Spirit which created me created also the tenants of the deep? No, my brother; if you shall find in God's Spirit the missing link between yourself and the animal world you will reach a Darwinism where there is nothing to degrade. You are not come from them, but you and they together are the offspring of God. Would you

have preferred to have had no such link between you? It is your forgetfulness of that link that has made you cruel to the creatures below. You do not oppress your brother man, because you know him to be your brother; but you think the beast of the field has no contact with the sympathy of your soul. It *has* a contact, an irrefragable, indestructible contact. You are bound together by one Spirit of creation; you sit at one communion table of nature; you are members of one body of natural life. The glory of being united to thy Father is that in Him thou shalt be united to everything. Thou shalt be allied not only to the highest but to the lowest, thou shalt be able not only to go up but to go down. Thou shalt have the power that thy Lord had—the power to empty thyself to the lowermost, to the uttermost. Thou shalt feel that thou owest all things thy sympathy when thou hast recognised this relationship through the same divine Spirit.

XX.

The Pervadingness of the Spirit.

"Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from Thy presence?"—Ps. cxxxix. 7.

GLORIOUS imprisonment, O splendid bondage, O divine wall of enclosure! I am shut in by Thee. I am more shut in by Thee than I used to be. In the days of old, to be driven out of Eden was to be driven from the presence of the Lord. But Thy presence is no longer limited to Eden. Thou hast filled with Thy glory the things that once were outside of Thee—the harp and the organ, the brass and the iron, the tents and tabernacles of daily life. The ark of Thy presence was once shut in to keep out the flood, but now it is opened to take in the flood itself. The seer of Patmos said of Thy regenerated world, "I beheld no temple therein." No wonder; when Thy presence shall be seen in every place, there shall be no special place sacred unto Thee. And indeed, whether we see it or not, Thou art already everywhere. We build churches to Thee and

consecrate them, but the site was consecrated before there was any church. In Thine eyes there is no difference between secular and sacred. All work is Thy work, all service is Thy service, all days are Thy day. I call my moral duties mere morality to distinguish them from my religion. Why should I seek thus to go from Thy Spirit, why should I strive thus to flee from Thy presence? The wall is of my own making, not Thine. Thou claimest all my duties as Thy worship. Thou callest all my acts by sacred names. I speak of my aspirations; Thou callest them prayers. I speak of my joys; Thou callest them psalms. I speak of my hopes; Thou callest them acts of faith. Help me to consecrate the daily life. Help me to write Thy name on the commonplace. Help me to experience Thy presence in the region which men have styled "the world." Help me to taste the bread of Thy communion in every act of kindness given or received, to reverence as Thy cup the cup of earthly water, even though bestowed only in a disciple's name. I shall serve Thee day and night in Thy temple when I can say "Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit."

XXI.

The Goodness of the Spirit.

"Teach me to do Thy will; for Thou art my God: Thy Spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness."—Ps. cxliii. 10.

WHAT a difference from the Mohammedan's prayer. He too prays "Teach me Thy will." He too asks that God would lead him to a destined land. But the resemblance ends there. The Mohammedan wants to be taught God's will because it is destiny; the Psalmist because it is good. To the Psalmist God's will is not an arbitrary thing. It is not the product of caprice, it is not the impulse of a passing hour; it is the voice of a character that has no choice but righteousness, "Thy Spirit is good." He would not say "Thy will be done," to *every* object of worship. It is not will which he reverences; it is the power behind the will —the Spirit. He would not allow himself to be led by a blind fate that knows not where it steers and cares not where it tends. He attaches no value to submission for the *sake* of submission; what he wants is submission to the *right*. He

will only obey a will which comes from a "good spirit," and which, because it comes from a good spirit, leads to a land of uprightness.

My Father, help me as a follower of Christ to say "Thy will be done." As a follower of *Christ:* it is easy to say it as a follower of Mohammed. What am I that I should resist Thy decrees or refuse to bend beneath Thy mandates? But I do not wish to bend; *Thou* dost not wish me to bend. Thou wouldest not have me accept Thy will because I *must* but because I *may*. Thou wouldest have me take it, not with resignation, but with joy, not with the absence of murmur, but with the song of praise. How shall I reach this goal? I shall only reach it by feeling what the Psalmist felt—that Thy will comes from a "good Spirit" and goes towards a land of uprightness. Teach me that Thy will is love; teach me that Thy love is wise. Guide me not blindfold, but with open eyes. Grant me the power to look both behind and before—behind to "Thy good Spirit," before to "the land of uprightness." Give me the blessedness of the man whose *delight* is in Thy law, who can tell of Thy statutes rejoicing the heart. I shall obey Thy will in perfect freedom when I can say "Thy Spirit is good."

XXII.

The Illumination of the Spirit.

"Behold I will pour out my Spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you."—PROV. i. 23.

THE words of a man are no revelation to thee until thou hast received his spirit. It is not the words that speak to thee; it is the common experience between thyself and the speaker. In vain will he talk to thee of sorrow if thou hast not known sorrow; in vain will he discourse to thee of beauty if thou hast not felt beauty. All thy revelations come from the spirit within thee. If thy spirit is not on the same mental height with him who walks by thy side his words will to thee be the accents of a foreign tongue. Even so is it with the words of God. The reading of all the chapters in the Bible will not reveal God to thee until they bear witness with thy spirit. Creation must precede revelation. Before God can speak to thee He must raise thee up to His own level. The divine alone can understand the divine. There are words lying in thy memory which are not

yet revealed to thee—holy words, sacred words, words learned at a mother's knee, but whose beauty is by thee as yet unfelt, unseen. When the Spirit comes the old words will come to thee as something new. Thou shalt marvel at what thou hast passed by unnoticed on the way. Thou shalt wonder at the richness of the Lord's Prayer, at the power of the Sermon on the Mount, at the tenderness of the story of a prodigal son. Thou shalt be surprised at the melody of old psalms, thrilled by the novelty of familiar incidents, stirred by the freshness of well-known passages. To him who is a new creature old things are all made new; the mine that was empty to the eye of sense, to the spirit reveals gold.

Thou divine Spirit illuminate to me the words of the Lord. Show me the wealth of glory that lies beneath the old familiar stories. Teach me the depth of meaning that is hid in the songs of Zion. Raise me to the height of aspiration that is compassed by the wings of the prophet. Lift me to the summit of faith that is trod by the feet of the Apostle. "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law." The wonders are in Thy law already; they do not need to be put there. But until Thou comest my eyes are in want of a lens by which to see them. They are like the well of water which Hagar did not behold, like the ram caught in the

thicket which Abraham did not discern, like the cake prepared on the fire which Elijah did not recognise. We need angels to tell us these things though they lie on our daily path. Shine in our hearts, Thou better Sun, and glorify the ancient message. Light up the old texts, irradiate the time-worn phrases, deepen the bygone meanings, revise the inadequate readings, reveal the latent applications, unlock the hidden doors. I shall find the treasures in my earthen vessels when Thou hast made known the words of the Lord.

XXIII.

The Peace of the Spirit.

"And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him."—Isa. xi. 2.

ALONE among the sons of men the Spirit came to Him in the form of rest. To us it always comes in the form of unrest. The beginnings of new life ever make us restless. We are disquieted by the novelty of our own vision, we are pained by its unlikeness to our present selves. Why is youth the time of unrest? It is because youth carries in its bosom a life higher than its own—the germ of that coming man for whose coming it is not yet ready. God's Spirit also comes as a germ in the bosom of a life not its own. It comes into the heart while the heart is yet in winter; it sings as a swallow in the cold. It is too big for its environment, it has seen too much for its surroundings; so it beats against the bars and struggles to be free. But far otherwise was it with *Him*. When the Spirit came to Him it came to no foreign soil; His heart was ready for it. There was no struggle between the year

that was coming and the year that was going; the dove from heaven rested in the pure waters of an already prepared soul. There was no strife between the breath of the divine Spirit and the atmosphere of the earthly wilderness; it was the Spirit that led Him *into* the wilderness. It was the underlying rest that conquered for Him the outward tempest. It made the stones bread in the valley; it gave calmness on the dizzy height. It smoothed a passage through the sea; it multiplied sustenance in a desert land. It bore the solitary burden of the garden; it endured the universal burden of the cross. It was a peace eternal, a peace continuous, a peace independent of war; the Spirit *rested* on Him.

Son of man, let me enter into Thy rest. Fulfil to me Thy latest promise, send me Thy peace. I often get Thy Spirit in flashes—in moments of transfiguration, in heights of Pisgah. But I want more than its flashes; I want its abiding rest. I want it to come to me as a permanent power, to be with me alway even unto the end of the world. I want it to be something which the world can neither give nor take away, which the hosannahs of Jerusalem cannot create nor the tears of Gethsemane destroy. That is what Thou hast promised me, that is what I wait for. Nothing less will make

life tolerable to me; nothing more remains to make it perfect. Thy peace passeth all understanding because it is unchanged amid the changing; give me also this fadeless bloom. Grant me too the power to pass from the opened heavens into the clouded wilderness and to hear undimmed the voice "This is my beloved Son." The dove that lighted on me at the Jordan must abide with me in the desert; the desert will be a Paradise when Thy Spirit has rested upon me.

XXIV.

The Spirit's Strength to a Nation.

"Because the palaces shall be forsaken; the multitude of the city shall be left; the forts and towers shall be for dens for ever, a joy of wild asses, a pasture of flocks; until the Spirit be poured upon us from on high."—Isa. xxxii. 14, 15.

THREE things are here said to depend on the Spirit—the palace, the city, and the tower. The Spirit is the glory of royalty; to be a king in God's sense is to be the servant of all. The Spirit is the secret of citizenship; to be a citizen in God's sense is to be the brother of all. The Spirit is the root of warlike strength; to be a soldier in God's sense is to be the defender of all—the defender of that righteousness which is at last the universal interest. God's Spirit is for the nation as well as for the man, and these three are the blessings of the nation. What else can I ask for my country than this trinity of privileges—that her court shall be always pure, that her cities shall be always flourishing, and that in the cause of righteousness her towers shall be always strong.

Lord of nations, bless our native land. Let

Thy divine Spirit be incarnated in its threefold life—in its rulers, in its citizens, in its soldiers. Impress its rulers with the responsibility of being great, the weightedness of being ministers to all. Impress its citizens with the multitude of their claims, the vastness of that brotherhood of which they are members. Impress its soldiers with the fearlessness that is born of duty, the courage that comes from devotion to the just and true. Purify its palaces, cleanse its streets, strengthen its bulwarks. Teach its rulers to say "Thy will be done," its citizens to cry "hallowed be Thy name," its soldiers to pray "Thy kingdom come." Let its kings be priests unto Thee; let its citizens be fathers to the multitude; let its soldiers be peacemakers to the world. May Thine altars not be removed from the high places; may Thy word not be silent in the homes of industrious toil; may Thy banner be unfurled in the camp and on the field. Then shall our land be full of Thy glory, a universal priesthood, a holy convocation. Then shall we be numbered amongst those nations which stand already at the right hand of Thy judgment seat and receive from Thee the blessing of the ministrant, "Enter ye into the joy of your Lord." Thy Spirit shall be poured on us from on high when Thou hast exalted our palaces, our cities, and our towers.

XXV.

The Spirit's mode of Regeneration.

"The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the Spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass."—ISA. xl. 7.

WHAT! the Spirit a destroyer! I thought it was the source of life. I would have expected it to have been written, "The grass withereth because the Spirit of the Lord doth *not* blow upon it." Here for the first time the breath of the Spirit is said to give not life but death. Yes, but is not death the prelude to life? "That which thou sowest is not quickened except it die." I used to think it strange that among the gods of the Hindoos there was one worshipped as "the Destroyer;" is not the Spirit here worshipped as the destroyer —the witherer of the grass. And is it not well that the grass should wither? Is not grass the very emblem of fadingness, the very principle of death. Is not to say that the grass shall wither, equivalent to saying that death shall die. The flowering of the flesh is killing the word of the Lord within me; if that word is to endure for

ever, the flowering of the flesh must fade. What power shall make it fade, what but the Spirit divine? Shall the breath that gave life to the waters do otherwise than destroy the adversary of its own gift? Shall it not blow upon the flesh that impedes the immortal life, shall it not breathe upon the grass that buries the word of the Lord?

O Thou divine Destroyer, Thou crucifier of sin, Thou abolisher of death, we worship Thee. Spirit of Calvary, Spirit of the redeeming Christ, blow upon our deadness that it may die. Wither all in my heart that would wither Thy word. Wither its pride, its self-seeking, its vanity. Wither its malice, its hatred, its envy, its all uncharitableness. Wither its preference for the seen and temporal, its estimation of the dross above the gold. Wither its hopes of being happy through the love of self, its prospects of avoiding misery through forgetfulness of others. Wither the gourd that shuts out the larger view, that prevents me from seeing the woes of Nineveh. When Thou blowest upon the grass, mortality shall be swallowed up of life; when the flower of the flesh shall fade, Thy word shall endure for ever.

XXVI.

The Heroism of the Spirit.

"I have put my Spirit upon Him; He shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause His voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall He not break, and the smoking flax shall He not quench."—Isa. xlii. 1–3.

WHAT a strange mode of bringing forth judgment! What a strange mode especially of bringing forth judgment "to the Gentiles." A Gentile's evidence for a man's possession of the divine Spirit was just the contrary; it was his power to cry, to lift up his voice, to let his anger be heard in the street, to break the bruised reed and quench the smoking flax; it was for gifts such as these that the Roman raised his heroes to the skies. But here is a new and unheard-of heroism. Here is a heroism whose strength consists in the power to suffer and not cry. Here is a Spirit which claims to be divine on the ground not of breaking but of being broken, not of bruising, but of being bruised. The Gentiles are judged by a new standard of strength—the standard of patience. They are no longer measured by what they can

do, but by what they can bear. They are no longer valued by the burdens they can impose, but by the burdens they can sustain. They are no longer asked how many towers they have pulled down, how many victims they have slain, how many homes they have made desolate. They are asked how many defeats they have borne undismayed, how many crosses they have received unmurmuring, how many obloquies they have endured unavenged. The valley has become a mountain, and the mountain a valley. The gentleness which was a mark of contempt has made its possessor great, and the testimonial for admission into the new army is this: "He shall not strive nor cry."

Son of Man, teach me the new ideal of manliness. Teach me the divinity of patience, the glory of long-suffering, the strength of endurance, the majesty of self-restraint. Teach me the heroism as well as the blessedness of being poor in spirit, meek, merciful, peace-making. Thou hast said "they shall be called the children of God." Thou hast promised that the time shall come when the peace-makers shall not only *be* God's children, but shall be called it—have the reputation of it in the eyes of the world. Hasten that happy time. Hasten the day when the garland shall be woven for the *restraint* of passion, when the brow shall be wreathed for

the *subjugation* of temper, when the monument shall be raised for the *refusal* to lift up the voice. Ring in the age when we shall prize the tender-hearted, when we shall reverence the forbearing, when we shall bow down before the power to forgive. Bring in the new judgment-day when we shall measure our strength by our capacity for endurance, our weakness by our inability to bear. The Gentiles shall judge themselves by Thy standard of power when they learn that Thy spirit of silence is the Spirit of God.

XXVII.

The Qualification for the Spirit.

"For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed."—Isa. xliv. 3.

MY qualification for being made divine is my thirstiness, my sense of want. That which makes me capable of receiving God's Spirit is not my feeling of boundlessness, but my struggle with limitations. That which makes me greater than the beasts of the field is not my superior strength, but my superior insight into my own weakness. My greatness is my sense of needs unsatisfied. Everything about me which makes me human is a form of thirst. My speculation is the thirst of my understanding. My love is the thirst of my heart. My aspiration is the thirst of my fancy. My prayer is the thirst of my spirit. I am a bundle of longings, and my longings are all prophecies. I could not long for anything if I had reached finality. Why do I seek so many things that are not here? Why do I not sing through the world as the bird sings through the firmament? It is because

the firmament is the bird's environment; the world is not *my* environment. If it were, I too would sing. But there is that within me which is not met by aught around me. My eye is not satisfied with its seeing, nor my ear with its hearing. My intellect is not filled with its knowledge, nor my heart with its love. I seek a perfect beauty, a perfect music, a perfect wisdom, a perfect soul. My thirst is the prophecy of an environment yet to be; I long for Thy Spirit, O Lord, and thereby I know that Thou too longest for me. Nothing but Thyself can enclose the aspirations of my heart, because nothing but *my*self can meet the desires of Thine. I am incomplete without Thee, because without me Thy fulness has not come. Come to my heart and we shall dwell together, I in Thee and Thou in me. Come to my heart and its hungering shall be filled, and Thy love shall be satisfied, and we shall be one. Come to my heart and there shall be a union of earth and heaven; day and night shall meet together, omnipotence and frailty shall embrace each other. I hope for Thy Spirit because I thirst for Thee.

XXVIII.

The Power of the Spirit.

"When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him."—Isa. lix. 19.

BEAUTIFUL contrast here—the gentle Spirit standing against the tempestuous flood. It would seem as if the calm Spirit would be a feeble standard-bearer in the face of the rushing waters. But in truth it is not so. Have you ever measured the strength that lies in being conscious of the right? It has doubled the power of armies. What is the reason that nations going to war are so eager to impress the world with the justice of their cause? It is because they know that to feel the justice of a cause is to have half the battle won. There is a power in the sense of right which covers much weakness; there is a weakness in the sense of wrong that destroys much power. I am not fully armed till I am armed with the whole armour of God. I have not raised a perfect embankment against the flood until the Spirit of the Lord has planted His standard there.

Spirit of Christ, help me to say "it is Thy will." No armour equals the sense of duty. When I hear Thy voice on the waters saying "It is I," the waters themselves subside and become a great calm. Nothing can make me calm amid the waters but that duty-call. When the enemy comes in like a flood, my heart is overwhelmed within me and I cry to be saved from the storm. But when duty says, "it is I," I no longer wish to be saved from the storm; I go out to meet it. My strength to meet it is still the same, no less and no more; the one new thing is Thy voice of conscience. But that is the addition of omnipotence; it rebukes the waves; it makes me strong. Thy standard is a moral standard; when that is lifted up I fear no foe. Lift up that standard, Thou Spirit of truth. Say "It is I, be not afraid." Say to my trembling soul, It is thy duty, it is thy mission, it is thy call. Say to my fainting heart, The voice of the Lord is upon the waters, the standard of the Lord shall be thy rearward. Say to my faltering will, The right is on thy side; "Lo! *I* am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Though the waters rise up to the brim they shall not overflow me, if only Thy voice shall say "Well done," if only there shall gleam behind me that standard of rectitude which is the lifting up of the banner of Thy power.

XXIX.

The Mission of the Spirit.

"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted."—Isa. lxi. 1.

GREAT thinker has said that Christianity first taught man the reverence for things beneath him. It is profoundly true. The Spirit of Christ can say distinctively, "He hath sent *me* to bind the broken heart." It has come through other channels for other purposes, but through this channel it has had but one purpose. Sometimes its mission has been to teach me God's majesty, sometimes to reveal His beauty, sometimes to proclaim His law. But here in the heart of Jesus the mission of the Spirit is to show me a new exhibition of God's power—His power of infinite stooping. The divine majesty has ceased to dwell in the heavens; it has begun to bend downwards. It has refused to admit any longer that it is outside the world of suffering; if it be infinite it must include the cross as well as the crown. Men

have sought to honour it by denying it a home amid the sorrowful; it repudiates such a limit to its universal presence. It demands admission into lowly things. It claims access into the hearts and homes of the sad. It knocks at the door of the child-life. It asks an entrance into the struggles of youth. It solicits participation in the cares and toils of manhood. Its latest glory is the glory of incarnation; it empties itself.

O Thou divine Spirit, I have found in the Son of man a new test of Thy presence. I used to see Thee by the vision of the eye, by the light of stars and systems, by the beauty of wood and field. But now I have lost somewhat of that ancient glory. Science has stolen the splendour of the stars, destroyed the spontaneity of the woods and fields; I speak of law where once I spoke of will. Art Thou gone then from my modern life, Thou Spirit of the Highest? No; Thou art only gone into a new channel—from the stars into the soul. I see Thee now in the cross, in the tidings brought to the meek, in the binding of wounded hearts. I see Thee in my reverence for things beneath me, in my interest for pain, in my sympathy with tears. I see Thee in the elevation of every valley, in the depression of every mountain, in the crooked ways made straight and the rough places plain.

I see Thee in the charity that beareth, believeth, hopeth, endureth all things; in the love that seeketh not her own; in the mercy that rejoices against judgment, in the forgiveness that welcomes even from the grave. These are the tests of Thy presence. The heavens may tell of Thy glory in more broken accents than of yore, but the strain has been taken up by loftier harps than theirs. It has passed into the hands of those who preach good tidings to the meek.

XXX.

The Spirit seeking the Valleys.

"As a beast goeth down into the valley, the Spirit of the Lord caused him to rest."—Isa. lxiii. 14.

[Revised Version. "As the cattle that go down into the valley, the Spirit of the Lord caused them to rest."]

THE Spirit gives us rest by abasing our animal nature, "as a beast goeth down into the valley." The process by which the cattle go down into the valley is not restful; it is the descent of a steep. Their rest is reached by unrest—by movement downward. Even so is it with thy spiritual rest. It is only in the valley of humiliation that thou canst find it. By nature thou art on the mountains. Thou art standing on the hilltop of vanity; thou seest nothing above thee; thou art a law unto thyself. And that is the secret of thine unrest. Thou art too near to thyself, too much in communion with thine own shadow. Thou hast come to view thyself as the centre of the universe; therefore thou art spiritually sick. Thou art fretted by every breeze that does not regale

thee, thou art disturbed by every sunbeam that does not cheer. But hast thou forgotten that thou art but one of a vast family every one of whom must be ministered unto even as thou? Hast thou forgotten that joy comes only by self-forgetfulness, that he who loveth his life shall lose it? Thou art in need of humility, thou art in want of the valley, O my soul. God's Spirit must lead thee down as the cattle are led down. Thou must be brought into a lowly place where thy pride shall die. Thou must be crucified together with Christ that thou mayest live; thou must be buried in the shadows of evening that there may be light. O glorious shadows that hide me from my own shadow, O gentle valley that divides me from the mountain of my pride, O wondrous evening that shelters me from the burden and heat of my selfish care, O rest of love that means the awakening of all that is noble, it is worth while to be brought down that I may repose in thee.

XXXI.

The Elevation of the Spirit.

"And the Spirit entered into me and set me upon my feet, that I heard him that spake unto me."—EZEK. ii. 2.

EXALTATION must precede revelation. I will not hear the words of Him that speaks to me if my soul is grovelling in the dust. Before I can hear Him the Spirit must set me on my feet, must cause me to stand upright, must impress me with the dignity of being a man. Consider, my soul, when is it that thou hearest most clearly the voice of duty? Is it not when thou art most conscious of thine own responsibility, most alive to thine own deathless greatness? It is when thou standest on thy feet in the sense of immortality that thou art most inspired by the message of revelation. Before all things the Spirit must lift thee up, raise thee into the level of the sunbeams. It is in vain that the mirror exists in the room if it is lying on its face; the sunbeams cannot reach it until its face is upturned to them. Even so is it with thee, my soul. Heaven lies about thee

not only in thine infancy, but at all times. But it is not enough that a place is prepared for thee; thou must be prepared for the place. It is not enough that thy light has come; thou as the Prophet says must arise thyself and shine. No outward shining can reveal unless thou art thyself a reflector of its glory. Nature cannot charm thee if thou art not already happy. Society cannot delight thee if thou art not already social. Goodness cannot gladden thee if thou art not already good. If thou wouldst see thy Father running to meet thee, thou must first say within thyself, "I will arise and go to my Father." What thy Father runs to meet is thy separation, thy want, thy need. He comes to thee because thou canst not live without Him, and the moment thou feelest that thou canst not. He waits until thou art dissatisfied with the swine-husks, until thou art weary of riotous living, until thou hast lifted thine eyes out of the miry clay; and then He flies to greet thee with the ring and the robe. When the Spirit has set thee on thy feet thou shalt hear the words of thy Father.

XXXII.

The Retrospect of the Spirit.

"Then the Spirit took (R. V. lifted) me up, and I heard behind me a voice of a great rushing, saying, Blessed be the glory of the Lord from His place."—EZEK. iii. 12.

WHEN the Spirit lifts me up I hear the voice of blessings *behind* me. From the place of my spiritual elevation I see the glory of the things I have passed by. My past life looks resplendent in the light of the new present. When I saw it in advance it seemed dark, but the moment it becomes a retrospect, the moment it lies behind me in the light of a higher experience, I see it to have been the best thing possible, I say of it, "Blessed be the glory of the Lord."

Spirit divine, reveal to me the glory of the things behind me, teach me the providence of the events that have gone by. I trusted Thee while they were *going* by; I was content to walk by faith; I murmured not. But faith is not Thy goal for me; it is sight. It is not enough that I should feel Thee to be my king; I must

see the king in his *beauty*. It is not enough that I should experience Thy strength in the wilderness; the wilderness must be made to blossom as the rose. It is not enough that an angel should support me in Gethsemane; Gethsemane itself must be glorified in the light of Olivet. I have not asked to trace Thee while Thy chariot wheels were passing; but now that they are past, O Spirit, let me see Thy face. Let me see Thee as Jacob saw Thee at Peniel—as a vindication of his struggle, as an explanation of his grief. Let me see Thee as Saul saw Thee at Tarsus—sending the future sunshine in the disguise of present darkness. Let me see Thee as John saw Thee at Patmos—revealing that the clouds of life were themselves but modes of Thy coming. I shall not weep for the depression of the passing hour, if only when the time of Thine uplifting comes, I shall see behind me the glory of the Lord.

XXXIII.

The Compulsion of the Spirit.

"So the Spirit lifted me up, and took me away, and I went in bitterness, in the heat of my spirit; but the hand of the Lord was strong upon me."—Ezek. iii. 14.

GOD'S Spirit often leads me against the will of *my* spirit; I go in bitterness in obedience to the pressure of a mightier Hand. How often do I say "a sense of duty compels me." It is a wonderful confession that there is something in me which is higher than myself, something which uses me as an instrument, which commands me as a servant. How many places have I visited as a sacrifice just because I ought to go; and how many times have I reaped from the sacrifice an unlooked-for harvest! I went in bitterness, in the heat of the spirit, in enforced submission to the call of right, and I found in the scene of my expected torment the turning-point of my destiny; under the dust-heap was gold.

Spirit of Christ, I thank Thee that Thy love constraineth me. I thank Thee that in the great

labyrinth of life Thou waitest not for my consent to lead me. I thank Thee that Thou leadest me by a way which I know not, by a way which is above the level of my poor understanding. I thank Thee that Thou art not repelled by my bitterness, that Thou art not turned aside by the heat of my spirit. There is no force in this universe so glorious as the force of Thy love; it *compels* me to come in. It binds me with golden fetters, it draws me with silver cords. O divine servitude, O slavery that makes me free, O love that imprisons me only to set my feet in a larger room, enclose me more and more within thy folds. Shut me in against myself—against my own bitterness, against the heat of my spirit. Protect me from the impetuous desires of my nature—desires as short-lived as they are impetuous. Ask me not where I would like to go; tell me where to go; lead me in Thine own way; hold me in Thine own light. I may go in the bitterness of my soul, I may journey in the heat of my spirit, but I shall reach the paths of pleasantness if the hand of my God be upon me.

XXXIV.

The Loneliness of the Spirit.

"Then the Spirit entered into me, and set me upon my feet, and said unto me, Go, shut thyself within thine house."—EZEK. iii. 24.

MY first experience of Christ's Spirit is a sense of solitude; it shuts me within my house. I feel myself to be alone amidst a crowd. It is not that I am ushered into new scenes; it is that the old scenery yields a new result. Yesterday I was quite filled by them; to-day, even while in contact with them, I am miles beyond them. Is not this a hard price to pay for being a Christian? Why should the Spirit of Christ bring me this asceticism, why should it shut me up within my own house? Why indeed? Think you the Spirit desires such a solitude? Think you the Son of Man would not have been glad if He could have trodden the winepress in company instead of alone? Think you that the goal of the Spirit is anything else than communion with humanity, that the will of the Spirit is anything else than the attainment of this goal? Do not blame the

Spirit that its entrance into thy heart makes thee solitary; it is the world that thou shouldst blame. The Spirit longs to be in every house as well as in thine. As long as it is shut up within thy house it is a spirit in prison, and it makes *thee* a spirit in prison. It pants to share itself with the world, and its panting becomes thy thirst. Its solitude is its cross; so is thine, O my soul. Thy house is not thy home; thy home is the house of humanity. Thine isolation is but for a moment, and shall melt in the brotherhood of man. When it pleases God to reveal His Son in thee, immediately thou communest not with flesh and blood; but it is only immediately, not ultimately. Thou shalt not linger for ever in Arabia; thou shalt return to Damascus, to Jerusalem, to Rome. Thou shalt not dwell for ever in Patmos; the time will come when there shall be no more sea. It is only at the grey dawn of morning that the Spirit says "Shut thyself within thine house."

XXXV.

The Spirit: the Fashion of the New Age.

"And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my Spirit."—JOEL ii. 28, 29.

AND so the Spirit is at last to become worldly, to be poured out upon all flesh. I am told that the fashion of this world passeth away; but into what does it pass? Into another fashion—the fashion of the Spirit. There is a time coming when there shall be no such word as secular. There is a time coming when the Spirit shall claim not only the churches but the streets and openings of the gates, not only the feebleness of old age but the visions of youth, not only the gravity of fathers but the mirth of sons and daughters, not only the service in the house of the Lord but the domestic service in the houses of men.

Thou divine Spirit, we long for this hour of Thine. Thine incarnation is not complete until Thou hast touched the lowest earth. It is not enough that Thou shouldst be a joy forever; Thou must be a universal joy. It is not enough that Thou art beautiful on the mountains; Thou must be resplendent in the valley. Thy triumph is the conquest of my lesser moments, the moments which I call secular. I consecrate to Thee the walls of my temple, but I have never consecrated to Thee the walls of my dwelling; I have never consecrated to Thee the streets of my native city. The exchange is unconsecrated, the counting-house is unconsecrated, the workshop is unconsecrated. The scenes of my pleasure are outside of Thee; the trifles of my life are apart from Thee; I have not yet suffered Thee to "fill all things." I limit Thee by too much magnifying Thee. I fear to degrade Thee by bringing Thee down to the plain; I give Thee my spirit but not my flesh. But Thou art not content with my spirit. Thou claimest the right to empty Thyself into my impotence. Thou desirest again to come in my flesh—to fill with Thy presence my Canas and my Nazareths and my Bethanies—to glad my marriage feasts and help my receipts of custom and light my household fires. Thy progress like the sun is a progress downward; Thy beginning is the

mountain but Thy climax is the dusty plain. The shepherds again shall sing their "Glory in the highest" when Thy life shall be poured "upon all flesh."

XXXVI.

The Victory of the Spirit.

"Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts."—ZECH. iv. 6.

THE Spirit of the Lord of Hosts is here distinguished from might and power, and rightly so. The Spirit of the Lord of Hosts is love—the sacrifice of might and power. The world has been made great by the gentlest of all its forces. Man had no dominion over the beast of the field until the advent of love. The animal raged within him unsubdued until the Christ came. Thunder, earthquake, and fire strove in vain to quell it; it yielded only to the still small voice. The Jew proposed the terrors of the law; the philosopher advised the crucifixion of feeling; neither could suppress the passions of the soul. But when love came, it conquered the old passions by a new passion. It sent not thunder but lightning. It forbade nothing, it crucified nothing, it destroyed nothing; it simply flashed on me the light of a new presence and the old presence died. There was no

mutilation of the heart, there was no destruction of the heart's ancient possessions; there was just a transcendent glory which made the ancient possessions valueless; they were destroyed "by the brightness of *His* coming."

O Son of Man, let my lower nature be conquered by *Thy* Spirit. I would not have it conquered by the terrors of law; these would bind my hands, but would leave my heart at war. I would not have it conquered by the death of feeling; that would save me from stepping into evil by depriving me of the power to walk at all. But I would have it conquered by Thee—a larger, purer love. I would have Thy beauty to extinguish all other beauties, Thy light to put out all other lights, Thy joy to dwarf all other joys. I do not want to be converted by mutilation but by expansion; I do not want to be made good by being narrowed but by being enlarged. Nothing but a higher love will subdue my lower love—subdue it without killing it. Might and power would reduce it to ashes in a moment, but my heart would be ashes too. Thou alone canst preserve my heart and yet burn its sin, Thou alone canst enlarge my nature and yet destroy its impurities. Thou alone canst subdue my will and yet sustain its resoluteness; not by might nor by power but by Thy Spirit, O Lord.

XXXVII.

The Spirit as in Christ.

"And, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon Him."
—MATT. iii. 16.

THE New Testament like the Old begins with the Spirit. Yet there is a difference in their beginnings. The Spirit of the Old Testament comes out from the darkness; it has to form the light by which we are to see it. But the Spirit of the New comes from light already created; it descends from the opened heavens. The Spirit of the Old Testament moves on the face of troubled waters; the Spirit of the New alights and reposes on the calm bosom of the Son of Man. No wonder the Spirit of the New Testament is like a dove; it has itself found peace in the heart of its own creation; it has reached in the soul of Jesus its Sabbath of rest.

Spirit divine, we are glad that Thou hast found rest. Long hast Thou waited to find it on the bosom of Thy creation. The earth could

not give it, the sea could not give it; the plant could not give it, the beast of the field could not give it. For a moment it seemed as if Thou hadst found it in the Eden of humanity, but the dream faded; there was no love there sacrificial enough to meet Thy love. And so Thy way was still through the sea and Thy path through the deep—trackless, homeless, friendless. But now at last Thou hast found a home. There has come a pure soul worthy of Thy habitation and Thou hast entered in. Thou beholdest at length the mirror of Thyself, the image of Thy beauty, the reflex of Thy love. Thou receivest at length the joy of communion—a joy that hitherto Thou hast given but never shared. Thou hast broken at length the solitude of unequalled greatness and hast found the man that is Thy fellow. Heaven and earth have met together and the middle wall of partition is destroyed that made Thy heart so long alone. Well mayest Thou come in the form of a dove, for Thou hast found the olive branch of peace; the Son of Man hath given Thee rest.

XXXVIII.

The Expulsive Power of the Spirit.

"But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you."—MATT. xii. 28.

IT is no proof of being in God's kingdom that a man is free from some of his past vices. It is not enough that the devils should be cast out; they must be cast out by Christ's Spirit. Other things than that can expel them. A man may lose his passions by becoming cold, he may grow dead to temptation by growing dead altogether. There are two kinds of calm in the moral world; there is a calm of summer heat, and there is a calm of ice-bound winter. Both have expelled from their seas the demon of the storm, but from how different a cause! The one peace has come from nature's fulness, the other from nature's barrenness; the one from the warmth of love, the other from the paralysis of selfishness.

Son of Man, it is by Thy Spirit alone that I wish my demons to be expelled. I would not be freed from vice by being freed from impulse;

I would not be made pure by being made an icicle. I would be pure as Thou art pure—not by receiving less life, but by getting more. I would be holy as Thou art holy—not by diminishing the impulses of nature, but by the overmastering strength of one impulse—Love. Love, more love, *Thy* love, it is that that I want—not life made feebler or more inert, but life more abundantly, Life Eternal. I pray that my flight from temptation be not in the winter—not prompted by mere iceboundness, mere inability to feel. I pray that my flight may be in the summer of Thy love, that I may be tempted from evil by the very temptation to goodness. Sin is a spirit and spirit can only be conquered *by* spirit. The expulsion of Satan from my heart is worthless if he be not expelled by Thee. Come into my heart, Thou Love unspeakable, and put *Thy* chains about him, and lead him captive at Thy will; if Thy Spirit shall cast him out, I shall know that the kingdom has come.

XXXIX.

The Spirit's Place in Missionary Preaching.

"Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."
—MATT. xxviii. 19.

THREE things there are which, each in their turn, have been the worship of the nations—the form of nature, the form of man and the life which has no form. There are some who have reverenced nature and called it the Father; there are some who have reverenced human beings and called them Sons of God; there are some who have reverenced the hidden life of the universe and called it the Divine Spirit. Christ says that the true worship must be a baptism into the character of all the three. He cries across the mission-field to the nations seeking light, "O ye that hold the truth in fragments, come and behold these fragments united in a single temple. Come and see your rival creeds reconciled and blended in one religion. Come and recognise that the faith

which you profess is not perfect till it is joined with the faith professed by your brother. Within this temple of mine you and your brother can meet side by side. Within this temple of mine the three corners of all worship are sanctified—the world above, the world around, and the world within. Here stand the children of the Father—those who worship the stars of heaven. Here stand the children of the Son—those who reverence the heroes of humanity. Here stand the children of the Spirit—those who bow down before the mystery of universal life. You will lose nothing in my temple of your own; you will only add your brother's to your own. You will learn a new lesson in my temple—the lesson of charity. You and your brother shall for the first time worship together; ye shall be no more twain, but one flesh. Ye shall not call one another idolators when ye shall see that each completes the other, that within my sacred Pantheon there is a place for all. The Presence in the sky, and the Presence in the soul, and the Great Presence everywhere that can be felt but never seen shall be united in one glory, and all flesh shall worship it together—the Father of an Infinite Majesty, His honourable, true, and only Son, also the Holy Ghost the Comforter."

XL.

The Purpose of the Spirit's Blessing.

"And immediately the Spirit driveth Him into the wilderness."
—MARK i. 12.

IT seemed a strange proof of divine favour. "Immediately," immediately after what? After the opened heavens and the dove-like peace and the voice of a Father's blessing, "Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." It is no abnormal experience. Thou too hast passed through it, O my soul. Are not the times of thy deepest depression just the moments that follow thy loftiest flight? Yesterday thou wert soaring far in the firmament and singing in the radiance of the morn; to-day thy wings are folded and thy song is silent. At noon thou wert basking in the sunshine of a Father's smile; at eve Thou art saying in the wilderness "My way is hid from the Lord." Nay, but, my soul, the very suddenness of the change is a proof that it is not revolutionary. Hast thou weighed the comfort of that word "immediately"? Why does it come so soon

after the blessing? Just to show that it is the sequel of the blessing. What was that in Jesus with which the Father was well pleased? It was the vision of what was to come, the vision of where the Spirit would drive Him. The Father saw that the dove-like peace which had fallen on the Son of Man would make Him fit for the wilderness; He blessed Him for what He would be able to bear. The shining on the banks of Jordan was the hour of His adoption, but the wilderness was the hour of His inheritance. Is it not ever so? God shines on thee to make thee fit for life's desert-places—for its Gethsemanes, for its Calvaries. He lifts thee up that He may give thee strength to go further down; He illuminates thee that He may send thee into the night, that He may make thee a help to the helpless. Not at all times art thou worthy of the wilderness; thou art only worthy of the wilderness after the splendours of Jordan. Nothing but the Son's vision can fit thee for the Spirit's burden; only the glory of the baptism can support the hunger of the desert.

XLI.

The Comfort of the Spirit.

"And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ."
—LUKE ii. 26.

THAT is a symbol of what the Spirit always reveals. It never tells me what is false to nature. It does not say that I shall be exempted from the common lot of man. It does not promise that I shall not see death. It says that I shall not see death until I have seen something else that will make death indifferent to me. I am not to be freed from the calamities of other men; I am not to expect such freedom. But I am to expect that in my case these calamities shall be preceded in the heart by another visitor who shall meet them at the door and rob them of their sting. They shall open the door with the hands of Esau, but it is with the voice of Jacob that they shall enter in, for their presence shall be anticipated by another Presence before whose power their roughness shall be smooth.

Spirit divine, reveal this light to me. I do not ask a cure from without; I ask a remedy from within. I claim not the chariot of fire, I beseech Thee only for the rod and the staff. I pray not for the path of flowers remote from the dwellings of human care; I only ask that ere I tread the thorns my shoes may be iron and brass. I seek not to build my tabernacle on a mount of dazzling light while the multitude toil and fret in the dark valley below; I only desire the strength to work without sense of toil and to serve much without being cumbered by the service. Reveal to me my own possibilities of doing and of bearing. Help me to meet to-day the things that I feared yesterday. Give me the garment of praise in the scenes once traversed with the spirit of heaviness. I shall not fear to see the inevitable valley of death, if first I shall behold my immortality in the face of the Lord's Christ.

XLII.

The Fire of the Spirit.

"He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire."
—LUKE iii. 16.

THERE is a fire which belongs to hell, and there is a fire which belongs to heaven. When Christ came He baptized everything into His own service—even fire. It was once the symbol of destruction, the mark of divine vengeance; it became in Him a gift of the Holy Ghost. There is a pain which only comes to those outside of hell, a fire which is only kindled by the touch of the Spirit. Be not dismayed that thy baptism has not brought thee peace; the birthday gift of God to thy soul must be not peace but war. When the light comes, must it not reveal the squalor of thy room and the meanness of thy furniture? As long as it was dark, these did not trouble thee; the absence of the heavenly fire was an absence of pain. But when the heavenly fire flashed into the apartment it flashed into thy soul a sublime discontent. There rose within thee the longing

for a lovelier dwelling-place, for a house with many mansions adorned with unsearchable riches. The vision of thine old self became terrible to thee; thine hour of revelation was thine hour of condemnation; the light that came from heaven was the day that made thee poor.

Spirit of Christ, baptize me into Thy pain. Say to my soul, "Enter thou into the *pain* of thy Lord." Teach my soul that my Lord's pain is the only road to my Lord's joy. Give me the greatest of all Thy gifts—the love that weeps for lovelessness. Grant me increasing fellowship with the cross of the Son of man. I would not, like Simon of Cyrene, be *compelled* to bear His cross; I would be crucified together with Him. I would feel what He felt when He beheld the city and wept over it; I would bear what He bore when He stood in the garden and bowed beneath the weight of human sin. I would know that I am like Him by having sympathy with His tears. Let me too be saddened with the sins and sorrows of the crowd; let me too be burdened with the deeds and destinies of humanity. I shall learn that I am in communion with Him when I am baptized with the pain of His fire.

XLIII.

The Spirit in Galilee.

"And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee."
—LUKE iv. 14.

SOME things in our lives look like meaningless repetitions; we seem to make no progress but to end where we began. Jesus returns to Galilee—returns to the place of His obscurity, the place of His toil. Yet the second Galilee is very different from the first. To the eye of a beholder He is walking amid the old scenes, but to His own eye they are all new; He has "returned in the power of the Spirit."

Thou divine Spirit that didst lead the Son of man back to His first home, I would like thus to be led by Thee. I would like to retrace the old ground with Thy new life in my heart. I would like to go back to Galilee under the influence of Thy power. It is one thing to be in Galilee *before*, it is another thing to be in Galilee *after* the foiling of the tempter. When I return to the world with *Thy* power it is no longer the same world to me; I can meet it

without fear. Give me that power, O Spirit. Fit me for the scenes of Galilee—the old scenes that used to conquer me. Fit me for the marriage feast of Cana; ripen me for the daily toil of Nazareth. Strengthen me to meet the temptations of the world by teaching me the temptations of the wilderness. Let me learn in the wilderness that my dangers come not from Galilee but from the solitudes of my own soul. Break my solitude with Thine own presence. Create within me Thy divine thirst for fellowship, Thy holy sense of brotherhood. Teach me the incompleteness of my life in the wilderness. Inspire me with the enthusiasm of humanity—the desire to find my crown in carrying another's cross. Lead me from the hunger for my own daily bread into that sympathy with others' hunger which says "*Our* Father." Then indeed may I go back without fear and without reproach. Galilee shall open its gates to me; life shall yield her treasures to me; pleasure shall give her hand to me; the Mammon of past unrighteousness shall be a friend to me. I shall return to Galilee in triumph when I come "in the power of the Spirit."

XLIV.

The Prayer for the Spirit.

"If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?"—LUKE xi. 13.

MUCH more;" I would have said "much less." Because I ask and receive a paltry material boon from a frail mortal, am I to expect that I shall receive for the asking the Spirit of the Almighty Himself? The very suggestion almost takes away the breath. Yes, my brother, but you are startled by the wrong end of the ladder. The thing to be wondered at is your power to *ask* for such a boon. Our prayers are always the measure of our possibilities. No man can aspire beyond the range of his nature, any more than a bird can fly beyond the compass of its wings. How can you ask for God's Spirit except through the lips of that Spirit itself? Flesh and blood could not have revealed to thee thy want of it; only thy Father which is in heaven. Only that which is divine can recognise its need of the divine; the emptiness

that cries for God has already begun to be filled.

Holy Spirit, I thirst for Thee, as in a dry parched land; I pant for the streams of Thy grace. It seems almost presumption thus to desire Thee, but my very thirst emboldens me. How could I thirst for Thee if Thou wert not the Spirit of my Father? How could I desire Thee if there were not already in me the same nature as Thine? It is by my need of Thee that I know my kinship with Thee, with my Father. I have no argument but my need, no language but my cry. I ask for Thee because I require Thee, and I require Thee because I I was made for Thee. The prayer that beats against the doors of Thy heaven is the protest of my unfinished nature against its own incompleteness; I shall only be complete in Thee. Come, therefore, and finish Thy divine creation. Thou wilt not leave me in the sixth morning amid the beasts of the field. Let me enter into Thy seventh day, into thy Sabbath rest, into Thine Eden's joy. Thou satisfiest the want of every living thing just because its need gives it a right to live; shall not my thirst for Thee, O Spirit of holiness, give me also a right to the river of Thy pleasures?

XLV.

The Unmeasuredness of the Spirit in Christ.

"For He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God, for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto Him."—JOHN iii. 34.

IT is the Baptist's soliloquy of surprise. He is looking on the outpouring of the Spirit on Jesus and he sees something unique. All the other outpourings of the Spirit had been limited—measured by the needs of a special time. Great men had been raised up with powers sufficient to do a particular work, and when that work was done they had been called "the ancients." But here was an outpouring on a single soul of gifts commensurate with *all* time; God gave not the Spirit by measure unto *Him*. It was a wonderful vision, and it has had a yet more wonderful realisation. I have not yet found the measure, the limit of the gifts of Jesus. They are as much adapted to the nineteenth century as to the first. The days of His flesh are long fled and have left nothing of their life behind. The men who

stood beside Him have become but monuments —grand to look at, but powerless to act or move. Yet here He stands, a living presence still, His eye undimmed, His natural strength unabated. The flight of years has not exhausted His energies. The advent of new thoughts has not tarnished His freshness. The change in public taste has not marred His beauty. The fading of past theologies has not diminished His glory. He is not superannuated by time; He is still what the evangelist of old called Him, "Jesus Christ our forerunner." He runs before us; He is in advance of us; like the Star of the East He always leads the way; we shall never in the race of progress come up to His measureless glory.

Spirit of Christ, Thou Star of the East, Thou forerunner of our humanity, lead on. We are seeking to be emancipated from the trammels of the past; Thou who art measureless, lead on. We are aspiring to be free from temporary creeds and systems; Thou who art limitless, lead on. Lead us to all things that cannot be measured—the peace that passeth understanding, the love that passeth knowledge, the joy that passeth utterance. Lead us to the fulness of the time, the brotherhood of man, the concord of the nations. Lead us to the boundlessness of hope, the endlessness of charity, the unstinted-

ness of benevolence. Lead us to the day when every valley shall be exalted, every mountain brought low, every rough place made plain. When we are broadened by Thy measureless Spirit we shall reach the Promised Land.

XLVI.

The Spirit's glorification of Christ.

"For the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified."—JOHN vii. 39.

HOW shall I know whether the Holy Ghost has been given to me? Is there any test by which I can judge of its presence or absence? The passage before us says that there is. It says that the Holy Ghost was not given "because Jesus was not glorified." The proof of the Spirit's absence is an unglorified Christ; the proof of its presence is a Christ who is honoured. My soul, hast thou considered this test of the Spirit within Thee? Thou art asking often anxiously for a sign of thy union with the Spirit. Thine outward life lags so far behind that it often seems to thee as if God had passed thee by. Yet in these words there is a mine of rich comfort for thee. The first test of the Spirit is not the outward life but the inward ideal. The life may lag behind, but the ideal can run on before to herald its coming. Thy test of God within thee is the

question, Is Jesus glorified? Is there hung up in thy heart a picture of the sinless One? He may be far yet from the tread of thy footsteps, but is His image in thy soul? Hast thou in the great world of bustle and conflict moments of aspiration towards Him? Are there times in which His presence flits through thy spirit and makes thee glad? Are there seasons in which thou sayest to thyself, "Oh to be like Him! to be near Him! to be even in the smallest sense partaker of His holiness!" Then within thy heart Jesus is already glorified. He may not yet be glorified in thy *world;* our actions travel slower than our sentiments. But, if already He lives thus in thine aspirations, He has had His coronation in thy heart. The heart is the metropolis of His empire; crown Him there and thou hast ensured His dominion everywhere. Art thou following Him in *spirit?* Art thou desiring Him, admiring Him, emulating Him? Art thou making him an ideal which thou wouldst like to hope for, to long for, to strive for? Then thou *hast* the test of the Spirit. Thou couldst not see Him as He is if thou wert not like Him. If thy pulse beats quicker at His presence, it is because His life is in thee; the Holy Ghost must have been given thee, because Jesus is glorified.

XLVII.

The Spirit's glorification of the Past.

"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."

—JOHN xiv. 26.

IT is the promise of a retrospective glory —a glorification of the past. Christ says that when the Spirit comes it will quicken old memories. Is it not ever so? Nothing can quicken my memory but the spirit of the thing remembered. Why is it that I remember some things so much better than others? It has nothing to do with comparative length of time; I may recollect best the farthest back incident. It depends entirely on the congruity of my spirit with the thing to be remembered. The scene which has best suited my taste will most easily be recalled by my memory. My memory depends on my interest and my interest is proportionate to my possession of a kindred spirit. Even so is it with the things of Christ.

To remember them I must sympathise with them. The scenes of His childhood would have been forgotten if a mother had not kept them in her heart. The scenes of His inner life would have been obliterated if a John had not treasured them in his soul. Inspiration is needed even for the recalling of history; it is the Spirit that brings to our remembrance.

Spirit divine, quicken my memory of Christ. I often lament its shortness when I should blame its want of interest. Create within me a deeper interest and I shall have a longer memory. Inspire me with the glory of the subject, the beauty of the theme, the grandeur of the contemplation. Inspire me with the love of Him who speaks, with the admiration of Him who acts, with the devotion to Him who suffers. Love never forgets; its past is ever present; its yesterday is always to-day. Love makes every memory say "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Let Thy love make the past a present to me. Let it bring to the gates of my life the footsteps of the Son of Man. Let it make my country a Palestine, my home a Nazareth, my family circle a Bethany, my temptation a pinnacle of the temple, my solitude a Transfiguration, my storm a Gennesaret, my cross a Calvary, my crown an Olivet. Let it preserve from fading the Day-spring from on high; let

it prevent from setting the star that rose in Bethlehem. The Gospel story shall not recede with time when Thy love has quickened the memory of my heart.

XLVIII.

The Road to the Spirit's Peace.

"And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost."—JOHN XX. 22.

WHEN He had said this." Said what? You will find it in the previous verse. "Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent Me, even so send I you." It was not till He had said this that Christ breathed upon them. Before He gave them the gift of the Spirit's peace He had to tell them the kind of peace they must expect; otherwise they would have been disappointed. He had to tell them that His peace meant what the world calls dispeace—submission to a sacrifice, "as my Father hath sent Me, even so send I you." How had the Father sent Him? From the height to the depths, from heaven to earth, from joy to tribulation, from life to death. The peace which His Father gave Him was a peace that could descend the valley, a peace that could meet the darkness, a peace that could bear the cross. Before I can receive that peace I must be prepared for it. I

must learn that His mission is to be my mission too—not the life of luxurious self-indulgence, but the beatitude of the poor in spirit.

Son of man, I shall only get Thy peace by moving in Thy sphere. Thy peace came to Thee by going where Thy Father sent Thee. Thou didst not get it first and then go into Gethsemane; it was in Gethsemane Thou didst find it. It came to Thee by doing the Father's will, came through persistent struggle, came by determination not to yield. So must it be with me. Thou wilt not send me Thy peace until Thou has sent myself on the path of sacrifice; Thy Olivet will only come to me on the steps of Thy Calvary. Thy will must precede Thy reward, I must serve Thee ere I can rejoice in Thee. Obedience first, then liberty; the cross first, then the crown; the wilderness first, then Nebo; the mission of sacrifice first, then the breath of the free Spirit. Thou shalt breathe Thy peace into my soul when Thou hast sent me where Thy Father sent Thee.

XLIX.

The Pentecost of the Spirit.

"And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."
—Acts ii. 4.

THE great advantage of the Spirit is that it gives me a common language. Before the Spirit comes I speak in my own tongue; I cannot interpret the language of my brother. But when I get the Spirit I get the thing called sympathy—the power to feel with another. The only language which I can speak in common with another is the language of the heart, for the language of the heart is the only tongue which has never changed. It is the same yesterday and to-day and for ever; it is the speech of man as man. If I can only get down into my own heart I have reached the base of universal humanity; for, the wants of *my* heart are the wants of the whole world. The tower of Babel was an act of pride; it was the struggle of each man to rise above his fellow and therefore it was the death of sympathy.

But the coming of the Spirit was a descent. It was a leading down of my soul into the depths of its own need and therefore it was an entrance into the prayers of every soul. We all live in the experience of others when the Spirit comes.

Spirit divine, outpour Thy Pentecost on me. Send forth that rushing mighty wind which shall break down the Babel tower of my own isolation. Send forth that fire of sympathy which shall burn up all that is narrow and mean and selfish within this soul of mine, and shall give me the right and the power to enter into the soul of my brother. I am imprisoned within myself until Thou comest; I can speak only one language—the language of selfishness. But thou canst make me a universal linguist. Thou canst enable me to understand the speech of every heart by giving me a heart of my own. Thou canst help me to translate the wants of others into my own experience and to ask "How would I feel in their place?" Evermore indue me with this divine gift—a gift whose glory is its pain, whose crown is its cross. Evermore grant me this mirror within—the sympathy that can take its impressions from all the burdens that are passing by. When Thou shalt give me utterance I shall speak the language of love.

L.

The Spirit: the Product of Joy.

"Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear."—ACTS ii. 33.

BEING by the right hand of God exalted He hath shed forth this." Why did He wait till He was exalted? Why did He not shed forth the Spirit from the shades of Gethsemane? It is because no man can impart his spirit in the hour of his depression. In the hour of my depression my spirit is crushed down within my own life; it cannot get out from me. Grief is not contagious; it is an object of pity, but it is not an object of desire. But joy *is* contagious; it imparts itself to others. When the weight is lifted from my spirit my spirit itself is lifted. My own being becomes too small for it. It breaks the boundaries of my solitude and begins to radiate into other lives. It goes forth from me spontaneously, even as from a bird goes forth its song. It becomes an atmosphere around me, and whatever comes near me

lives in that atmosphere. When the insignificant mustard seed becomes a glorious tree the fowls of the air lodge in the branches thereof. My spirit sheds itself forth in the day when it is exalted.

Son of man, I know now the meaning of the words "greater works than these shall ye do, because I go unto my Father." They mean that Thine elevation into joy makes Thy Spirit more potent over humanity. Thou hast ascended up on high; Thou hast led captivity captive, and therefore the captivity of Thine own Spirit has been led captive. It has burst forth from the new joy of Thy life, Thy resurrection joy. Thy gladness has become what Thy grief could not become—contagious. Humanity was afraid to join in the procession to Thy cross, but it has joined with rapture in Thy Pentecostal song. There were few that could watch with Thee in Thy depression, but Thy lifting up has drawn all men to Thee. Thy transfiguration has glorified Thy life-long death which was completed at Jerusalem; it has ennobled sorrow; it has made the cross divine. The invitation is irresistible when it says "Enter into the *joy* of Thy Lord;" it is from Thine exalted heart that Thy Spirit flows.

LI.

Lying to the Spirit.

"But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?"
—Acts v. 3.

"LIE to the Holy Ghost," that is surely a strange phrase. Why does not Peter say that Ananias had told himself a lie? Because Ananias had not done so. His was not a spoken but an acted lie. He was not doing anything which the world would have called dishonourable. In honour he was not bound to give more than part. True, others were giving the whole, but they were giving it voluntarily. Ananias wanted to seem like other people without the trouble of being so. He tried to come in with the stream and to be thought a part of the stream. He laid down the money and said he got it for the land, and that was true. It was the truth in the ears of men but not in the eye of the Spirit. The thing most visible to the eye of the Spirit was the thing unrecorded to the ears of men; it was the part

of the price kept back. It was a silent falsehood, a falsehood where there was no speech and no language; it was uttered only to the Holy Ghost.

Spirit of truth, there are some untruths that I tell only to Thee. There are unspoken falsehoods not heard by the ear of my brother man which yet are audible to Thee. Sometimes I hear one maligned whom I do not love. I know that the charge is untrue, yet because I do not love the man I am not sorry that others should not love him; therefore I keep silent. I think I have done well not to have joined in the calumny, but to Thine ear I *have* joined in it. I have kept back part of the price of duty. My silence has evaded the law of man, but it has lied unto Thee. O Thou divine Spirit, cleanse me from the deceit of my own heart. Reveal to me that the majesty of truth is seated not without but within. Reveal to me that it is not enough that my charity should say no evil; it must not keep back the good. Reveal to me that there are times when silence is not golden, when silence is the absence of gold. Lift me above that spirit of detraction which fears to strike but has not the grace to succour. Raise me above the meanness that keeps back the price of justice from an injured foe. I shall be as transparent as the day when I have spoken the truth to Thee.

LII.

The Spirit's Witness to Olivet.

"Him hath God exalted with His right hand. . . . And we are His witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey Him."—ACTS v. 31, 32.

PETER says that the inward life of every Christian repeats the experience of the Master. He says that the Holy Ghost is a witness of Christ's exaltation. He means that in the process of the Christian life His Spirit leads every man over the same path from depression into joy. He declares that God has given the Spirit to them that *obey* Him. Is there then to be a preliminary period in which we are to have the work without the joy? Yes. We are not all at once to get the Spirit—the freedom, the spontaneity, the gladness of the life divine. That is the gift of the summer, but the winter and the spring come before the summer. The Spirit only comes after obedience has come. We must be content at first to have the subdued will. We must consent at the outset to go where we do not want to go—to go simply be-

cause our Father sends us. We must be prepared for some time to inquire in God's tabernacle before we are permitted to see His beauty. We must expect like the Son of man days in which we shall cry "I thirst." We must enter the kingdom by the strait gate of obedience, by the valley of constraint, by the door on which it is written, "Not as I will, but as Thou wilt."

Yet be still, my soul, thy joy is at the door; after obedience the Spirit comes. Thy prayer shall not always be, "not as I will, but as Thou wilt." By-and-by thy will shall be one with the will of thy Father. To-day thou art taking the cup in a trembling hand; if it were possible thou wouldst pass it from thee. But to-morrow thy hand will not tremble; thy heart will not fail; thou shalt say, "I and my Father are one." When the Spirit comes thou shalt walk with God. He shall no longer move in advance of thee, merely directing thy way; thou shalt travel by His side in voluntary fellowship. He shall no longer need to go before thee into Galilee, thou shalt thyself accompany Him into Galilee and choose for thy place in life what was once the shadow of death. Thou shalt share the exaltation of thy Lord when thou hast carried His cross for a while; when thou hast bowed thy head and given up thy spirit the Spirit of the Highest shall be given unto thee.

LIII.

The Vision of the Spirit.

"But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the Glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God."—ACTS vii. 55.

HE, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up and saw." There is a vision which only comes with spiritual fulness. In the world of nature the sight is the door to the spirit, but in the world of grace the spirit is the door to the sight. In my natural life God enters from without and penetrates within; in my spiritual life God enters from within and makes His progress outward. The first thing in the life of nature is the last thing in the life of spirit—vision. I am often asking why it is that so little is revealed to me; it is because I myself am so little. If I had more spirituality I would have more sight. There are treasures lying at the door of my dwelling which seem to me simply like a dust-heap. Some day I shall awake and marvel at my own riches; I shall marvel at the wells of water which were lying in my

desert; I shall marvel at the crowns that were cast at the foot of my cross; I shall marvel at the beauty which lay at the top of the Dolorous way. The revelation is already waiting for me; it is blazoned on the sky, it is imprinted on the air; it will be inscribed upon my heart when I have ceased to be a child. When I am full of the Holy Ghost I shall look up and see.

O Spirit of holiness, grant me Thy latest gift —light. Thy beginning is love, but light shall be Thine ending. Thy spring-time is in my *heart*, but Thy summer shall be in mine eyes. It is not a new sense I want, it is the power to interpret the old senses. I want to be led back over the old road to read its sign-posts in the light of later years. I want to go over the ground which I called barren and see if it had not all the time been strewn with flowers. I want to see the glory of that which was once my cross, the beauty of that which was once my thorn, the triumph of that which was once my trial. I want to learn that the days which seemed to me most dark and dreary were in truth the days when heaven was opened to my view. When Thou hast taught me the glory of sacrifice I shall look steadfastly on the things before which I once quailed; above the very place of my martyrdom I shall see Jesus.

LIV.

The Spirit's use for Wealth.

"Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot."—ACTS viii. 29.

JOIN thyself to this chariot." It is not every chariot that can be joined by the prompting of the Spirit; there are forms of worldly riches which eat out the divine life. Yet the evil is not in the chariots but in their drivers. The Spirit does not wish to destroy the chariot but to get hold of the reins. It wants to turn the heads of the horses into a new direction—the direction of humanity. So far from despising the wealth of this world, it is the wealth of this world that the Spirit chiefly needs. It seeks to make friends of that which is now the Mammon of unrighteousness. It wants men of influence, men of power, men of resources, men who can afford to spend. It knows the power of the mountains over the valleys, and therefore it prays to the mountains. It says, "Come down, ye rich, and help the poor; come down, ye strong, and support the

weak; come down, ye great, and make lighter the work of the lowly. Come and lift the toiling missionary, come and clothe the ragged school, come and heal the myriad sick, come and feed the starving millions. Bring your gold and silver to the feet of the child-Christ—to the door of that humanity which lies still in the manger of Bethlehem."

Spirit of Christ, let the chariots of the world join themselves to Thee. May they join themselves to Thee on the road on which Thou art going—the way through the desert. Thy way is ever through the wilderness across the track where the lonely dwell. Thy path is ever amid the waste places of the earth, where the labouring seem to toil without reward, and the heavy-laden to endure in vain. Into that desert let Mammon bring his chariots to Thee. Into these waste places let Ethiopia pour her treasures for Thy use. Let Tarshish and the isles bring presents, let Sheba and Seba offer gifts. Let Ophir bring her gold, and Araby her spices, and Egypt her costly gems, and let them lay them on Thy altar—the altar of humanity. When the box of precious ointment shall be poured on Thy bleeding head, the chariots of earth shall have become Thy chariot of fire.

LV.

The Separations of the Spirit.

"As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them."—ACTS xiii. 2.

S there then a separation of friends which owes its origin to divine love? These men had been watching together, communing together, praying together; was it not hard that a separation should come, harder still that it should come from the Spirit of God? Nay, but the separation was meant to be the cement of a future and a firmer union. It was the removal from a lower circle of two of its greatest members in order that these might find a more powerful rivet of the chain. The Spirit of love had given a temporary wound to love for the sake of love. It had brought a shadow upon the scene in the interest of a brighter sunshine, it had cast a gloom over the day in preparation for a grander glory.

O Thou divine Spirit, I thank Thee for this revelation. My darkest hours have been the

hours that have separated great souls from the circle of earthly life. I have seen the leaders of the age in church and state removed and I have asked why the work of humanity is so indifferent to Thee. But Thou hast answered me here. Thou hast told me that these separations came not from Thine indifference but from Thine interest in the work of humanity. Thy separations are separations "*for* the work of the ministry." There are spirits that cannot serve Thee perfectly in the tabernacle of clay; Thou breakest the tabernacle and settest them free. There are souls that would do greater works than what we see if they could only ascend to their Father; Thou givest them wings that they may fly away. There are lives that could speak to larger numbers if they had powers of larger locomotion; Thou sendest the chariot called death and settest their feet in a large room. Thou art Thyself the union of all separations; the chariot cannot long divide us if its goal is towards Thee.

LVI.

The Prohibitions of the Spirit.

"After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not."—Acts xvi. 7.

WHAT a strange prohibition! These men were going into Bithynia just to do Christ's work and the door is shut against them by Christ's own Spirit. I too have experienced this in certain moments. I have sometimes found myself interrupted in what seemed to me a career of usefulness. Opposition came and forced me to go back, or sickness came and compelled me to retire into a desert place apart. It was hard at such times to leave my work undone when I believed that work to be the service of the Spirit. But I came to remember that the Spirit has not only a service of work but a service of waiting. I came to see that in the Kingdom of Christ there are not only times for action but times in which to forbear from acting. I came to learn that the desert place apart is often the most useful spot in the varied life of man—more rich in harvest

than the seasons in which the corn and wine abounded. I have been taught by the songs of the night to thank the blessed Spirit that many a darling Bithynia had to be left unvisited by me.

And so, Thou divine Spirit, would I still be led by Thee. Still there come to me disappointed prospects of usefulness. To-day the door seems to open into life and work for Thee; to-morrow it closes before me just as I am about to enter. Teach me to see another door in the very inaction of the hour. Help me to find in the very prohibition thus to serve Thee a new opening into Thy service. Inspire me with the knowledge that a man may at times be called to do his duty by doing nothing, to work by keeping still, to serve by waiting. Awaken me to the conviction that there are moments of solitary repose which are more rich in their result to humanity than centuries of busy strife. When I remember the power of the still small voice I shall not murmur that sometimes the Spirit suffers me not to go.

LVII.

The Unconscious Working of the Spirit.

"He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost."—ACTS xix. 2.

AND these men were disciples! They are in so many words ranked among the believers, and yet they say that they never heard of the Holy Ghost. I thought no man could be a believer except through the Spirit. Neither he can, but it does not follow that he should at once see where his belief comes from. The infant can only recognise an outer world through the light, yet the infant never heard the name of light. Even so is it in the spiritual world. We see at the outset a beauty to which we cannot give a name; like Jacob's angel it wrestles with us but refuses to be defined. We perhaps deny to ourselves even the name of Christian, while all the time Christ is in our heart and in our mind. We perhaps call our lofty thoughts by other names—culture, civilisation, social progress, development, while

behind all these, at the birth of all these, there has been hiding within our souls the presence and the power of the Eternal.

Spirit of Christ, help me to trace more widely Thy presence and Thy power. Teach me that Thou art the source of all light even when it shines amidst those who deny Thee. I distinguish between gifts of nature and gifts of grace; teach me that nature itself is a gift of grace from Thee. Give me the power to impute Thy presence wherever I behold the works of love. There are men who say, "I will not," and yet go —men who call themselves unbelievers and yet do the works of the Father. Help me to impute to them more than they claim, to see that no man could do these works unless Thou hadst sent him. Help me to give to such the hand of brotherhood, the bond of fellowship, the cup of communion, to recognise that we must reach the unity of the heart before we can come into the unity of the faith. Help me to detect the family likeness that binds me to men of other creeds— the evidence of one Fatherhood, the proof of one humanity; then shall I rank amongst my Lord's disciples many even of those who say that they never heard of the Holy Ghost.

LVIII.

The Fetters of the Spirit.

"And now, behold, I go bound in the Spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there."—ACTS xx. 22.

GO bound in the Spirit." There is an instinct in the world of the Spirit as there is an instinct in the world of the animal; there is nothing so like the lowest as the highest. The bee moves toward the making of its hive because it is bound to go. It is impelled by a power it does not know, directed by a voice it cannot understand. Even so is it in the life of the Spirit. If I wait till I can see the goal of my own actions I shall never act at all. If I go to Jerusalem I must be content to go "not knowing the things that shall befall me there." There is a binding of the Spirit which is quite distinct from the voice of reason. Sometimes it comes in a sense of duty, sometimes in a flash of aspiration, sometimes in an impulse of love. But in whatever form it comes it takes no denial. It makes my action instinctively necessary. It commands and thence-

forth I am bound to go—without waiting for sunrise, without measuring the ground, without learning the name of the country; it must be written of me as of Abraham "he went out not knowing whither he went."

Spirit of Christ, Thy chain is golden. The fetters Thou imposest are wings of freedom. There is no liberty like the liberty of being bound to go. When Thou layest upon me the sense of obligation, that moment Thou settest my spirit free. When Thou sayest that I must, my heart says, "I can." My strength is proportionate to the strength of those cords that bind me. I am never so unrestrained as when I am constrained by Thy love. Evermore, Thou divine Spirit, guide me by this instinct of the right. Put round about my heart the cord of Thy captivating love and draw me whither in my own light I would not go. Bind me to Thyself as Thou bindest the planets to the sun, that it may become the very law of my nature to be led by Thee. May I be content to know that goodness and mercy shall *follow* me without waiting to see them in advance of me. May I be content to feel that my God shall be my rearward without folding my hands till I find Him in the van. My journey to Jerusalem shall be fraught with power when in the strength of the Spirit I am bound to go.

LIX.

The Mastership of the Spirit.

"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood."—Acts xx. 28.

TO be made an overseer by the Holy Ghost is a very different thing from being made an overseer by the world. To be made an overseer by the world is to be made a master, but to be created overseer by the Spirit is to be made a servant. One would have expected the words to be "the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, therefore take care to rule." Instead of that it is the contrary, "the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, therefore take care to feed, to nourish, to minister." Divine power is not like any other power. Every other power lifts me above my brother, but divine power puts me beneath my brother, it is the power of stooping. God Himself has purchased His

conquest "with His blood." It is because the power of His Spirit is a power of sacrifice that the presence of His Spirit in me must be manifested in sacrifice. The Son of man proclaimed Himself a king when before the judgment seat of Pilate He put on the martyr's crown; even so, the hour when the Spirit makes me overseer must also be that hour in which I feed the wants of men.

Spirit of Christ, give me the sign that Thou art in me. The sign that Thou art in me is the possession of Thy power, and Thy power is sacrifice. It is the sacrificial blood of love that makes Thee a Providence; let the same life make me an overseer. Thou rulest in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth because Thou openest Thy hand to satisfy the desires of all that live; Thine empire is built on ministration. Even such would I have my empire to be. I would have it founded on the seas and established on the floods. I would have it constructed on the power to toil with those who work, to bear with those who are burdened, to weep with those who weep. Help me to realise day by day that the possession of the keys of Thy kingdom is the commission to feed Thy sheep. Help me to learn hour by hour that the test of loving more than others love

is the stooping to feed Thy lambs. The measure of my power shall be the measure of my self-forgetfulness; I shall know that Thou hast made me an overseer when in sacrifice I have shed my blood.

LX.

The Spirit's Expulsion of False Shame.

"And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us."
—ROMANS v. 5.

THE great difficulty with which early Christianity had to fight was a false shame. It was on the unpopular side, and youth does not like to be unpopular. The rising generation was in the minority; it was ashamed of its own hopes. How was the Christian hope to be lifted out of this shame? Paul says it could only be done in one way—by the coming into the heart of the spirit of love. And truly Paul is right. Love is the only conqueror of shame. A conviction may penetrate my intellect and yet I may shrink from avowing it. But when it is "shed abroad in my heart" all shame vanishes. When love comes I lift up my head before the world. The unpopularity of the cause becomes to me its glory. Love

longs for sacrifice and the unpopularity presents the sacrifice. Love struggles to pour out its treasures, and the poverty of its object supplies its need. It glories in its chain, it rejoices in its tribulation, it exults in its humility. It would not give up its cross for the crown of a king or the robe of a seraph. It would not resign its burden of another's care though it were offered in exchange the wings of an eagle to mount and not be weary. It finds its highest pride in flying downwards; it "maketh not ashamed."

Spirit divine, shed abroad in my heart the love of Jesus. Create within me that perfect love which maketh not ashamed. Inspire me with the power to follow Him into these lowly places where He delights to dwell. Impel me to go down with Him into the regions that sit in darkness, to accompany Him into the valley of the shadow of death. Help me to lift His cross in the face of the universe, to carry His burden in the sight of all mankind. Enable me to see the majesty of His crown of thorns. Let me feel the glory of being with Him in the solitude of Gethsemane, of watching when others sleep, of standing when others flee. Let me learn the privilege of pouring the costly ointment on that wounded head that was wreathed

with the sorrows of humanity. When Thou hast shed abroad the love of Him in my soul I shall not be ashamed to hope for the outcasts whom He bore.

LXI.

The Liberty of the Spirit.

"For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."—ROMANS viii. 2.

NOTHING but an inward law can make me free from outward law. I am often as much the child of Mount Sinai as was the Jew. I walk through the world as the boy walks through the schoolroom —remembering that he has lessons to learn and that he has answers to record. I speak of my responsibility, of my accountableness, of my judgment to come. That is the law of sin and death, and it is a very useful law; it keeps back the hand from much that is evil. But does it keep back the heart? No, there is the weak spot. The heart submits but it does not feel free. It is no more free than the boy in the schoolroom is free; I want to be in the playground but I am compelled to attend the class. Who will release me from this compulsion? Who will liberate me from this thraldom? Who will break the chain that

binds me and restore to me the joy of my unfettered days, the freshness of the unforbidden morning?

Thou, O Spirit! Thou canst set me free. It is not in freedom from the chain that my liberation must come; it is in love of the chain. It is not by leaving the school for the playground that I shall become a free man; it is in making the school itself a playground. What I want is not fewer burdens but more life, more love. I want Thy law which now is outward to become inward—the breath of my nature, the necessity of my being. I want Thy life to become to me a habit, an instinct, an environment, an atmosphere out of which is death. I want to find that to be absent from Thy service is to be in poisoned air, that to be engaged in Thy work is to play in my native element. I would make my service to Thee not an obedience but a thirst—the thirst of the hart for those water-brooks without which its nature is unfinished. When the order of Thy life has become my law I shall be free from that other law which was made for sin and death.

LXII.

The Spirit as a Harbinger.

"And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness."—ROMANS viii. 10.

THE test of being in Christ is not the body but the Spirit. Paul says that after Christ has entered into a man the body may for a time remain dead; in other words, the bad outward habits of the past may not at once die. But he says that even amidst this outward barrenness there shall be already a herald of the spring; the body may be dead but the Spirit shall be alive. What does he mean? He means that the earliest part of us is our aspirations. Our desires come before our deeds. They are what the swallows are to the summer—its harbingers. They do not accompany the fruit but they predict its coming. They are the songs of the shepherds on the plains of Bethlehem. While yet the outer scene is wrapt in night, while yet the visible Christ is lying in a manger, they utter the prophecy of the approaching age of gold,

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill to the children of men."

O Thou divine Christ, give me the evidence that Thou art in me. My earliest sense of Thy presence in my heart must be my admiration of Thy beauty. My love of Thee must precede my imitation of Thee. Let me not be dismayed though my body should for some time remain dead after my aspirations have become alive. Thy foliage is earlier than Thy fruit; Thy summer is in advance of Thine autumn; Thy loveliness is seen before Thy law. I am a partaker of Thy Spirit before I am a member of Thy body; I admire Thee sooner than I can follow Thee. I know that Thy sacred year is not complete without the autumn; I know that Thy foliage is useless without the fruit. But though the dawn would be useless without the day, it is the prelude to the day. Even so is it with the dawn of Thy Spirit within me. There is still darkness all around; the actions are impure; the body is dead. But the aspiration is already up in the sky; the hope is already aloft in the heart; the ideal is already reigning in the air, and therefore I know assuredly that the reality is not far away. When my spirit aspires after righteousness it is because in me Thy Spirit of righteousness is alive.

LXIII.

The Abstinence of the Spirit.

"But if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live."—ROMANS viii. 13.

"THROUGH the Spirit," that is an important qualification. There are men who mortify the deeds of the body *not* through the Spirit. There are men who have abjured the world from disappointment, from jealousy, from jaundice. They have gone into the solitude and shut the cloister cell and refused entrance to the face of man. That is not to mortify the body "through the Spirit." It cannot be said of such "ye shall live;" theirs is a perpetual death. Wouldst thou mortify thy flesh "through the Spirit"? then must thou abstain from evil for the sake of *love*. The Spirit is itself love, and to do anything through the Spirit is to do it for love's sake. Wouldst thou mortify thy flesh "through the Spirit"? then must thy motive be not grief but joy. The sacrifice must be covered by a

mightier sense of gain. The pain must be swallowed up in victory—the victory of love. The loss must come to thee not as an impoverishment but as an enrichment, not as a process of deadening but as the throbbing of a new life; he that sacrifices "through the Spirit" in the moment of his sacrifice "shall live."

Spirit of love; Spirit of the Son of man, let me only sacrifice "through Thee." Thou desirest not my pain, else would I give it Thee; if I give my body to be burned and have not love, it profiteth Thee nothing. What is it that Thou prizest in my pain? Nothing but the proof of my love. Thou sayest to my soul 'Canst thou go with Me where I go; canst thou dwell with Me where I dwell? Dost thou love Me well enough to accompany Me into yonder lone Gethsemane? Dost thou deem Me dear enough to stand by My side in the dark night? Dost thou hold Me precious enough to take the cup into thy hand because it has been in *My* hand? Wouldst thou rather share My grief than be possessor of a joy unshared by Me? Wouldst thou rather watch with Me under the shadow of My heavy heart than sleep away the hours in personal repose? Then I bless thy tears; I prize thy cross; I value thy sorrow; I accept thy sacrifice. Thy burnt

offering is to Me a pillar of fire by night; it warms Me, it gladdens Me, for it tells Me of a kindred soul. Thou hast crucified thy body through the love of My Spirit; therefore thou shalt live with Me.'

LXIV.

The Spirit seeking the Body.

"And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body."

—ROMANS viii. 23.

THE idea is a very striking one. 'Even we—the men who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, are not satisfied without the redemption of the body too. Even we, who are supposed to have our souls anchored in another world, are not content to let the present world go. It is not enough for us to believe, as we do believe, that there are regions beyond the seen and temporal; we want the region that is seen and temporal to be itself redeemed and glorified. It is not enough for us to know that there is a sacred as well as a secular life; we want the secular life to be made itself sacred. It is not enough for us to recognise that there is a city not built with hands; we want to feel that every village of the world was

meant to be a street of that city. We want to see the deep things of God thrown up upon the surface of society, to behold the life of the Spirit permeating the life of the flesh, to find the impress of eternity stamped upon the forms of time. We wait for the creation itself to be delivered from bondage into freedom. We wait for the time when we shall have pleasure without hurt, knowledge without detriment, research without shaking, criticism without irreverence, culture without coldness, contact with impurity without sin. We, the men of the Spirit, desire most of all the redemption of the body.'

Spirit Divine, make the body divine too. Redeem this outer man from the sense of bondage. Give me an enlarged liberty of action, an extended sphere of locomotion, a wider boundary of possession. Give me the power to visit more places without injury, to do more things without harm, to taste more pleasures without corruption. Give me the grace to walk through the corn fields on the Sabbath day and yet to keep the Sabbath even in my walking. Give me the strength to go to the marriage feast of Cana, and yet to make a sacrament even of the nuptial joy. Give me the purity to sit down in the social circle of Bethany and yet to preserve the heart uncumbered by social cares. Give me, above all, the spotlessness of

soul that can touch the world and remain unspotted still—exposed, yet undefiled, assailed, yet free from tarnish, tempted, yet without sin. The Spirit indeed is willing; but I groan within myself for the redemption of the body.

LXV.

The Intercession of the Spirit.

"Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered."
—ROMANS viii. 26.

THERE are times in this human life in which we have no language but a cry, a wail that can find no words, a groaning that cannot be uttered. There is no speech and there is no language; the voice of supplication is not heard; only from the inmost recesses of the soul there rise up unspoken cries which are eloquent in their very speechlessness. They ask for nothing; they know not what they ought to pray for. But Paul says that to every one of these cries there is imputed the value of a prayer. Each of them is counted an intercession of the Spirit. The Father translates the lispings of His child into His own language; He imputes to me what I would say if I could speak. He helps my infirmity in asking by reading between the

lines. He interprets the groans of the heart not by its feeble capacity for expression, but by the largeness of His own love. The prayers of the Spirit are the unuttered voices of the soul.

O my Father, I have moments of deep unrest —moments when I know not what to ask by reason of the very excess of my wants. I have in these hours no words for Thee, no conscious prayers for Thee. My cry seems purely worldly; I want only the wings of a dove that I may flee away. Yet all the time Thou hast accepted my unrest as a prayer. Thou hast interpreted its cry for a dove's wings as a cry for Thee. Thou hast received the nameless longings of my heart as the intercessions of Thy Spirit. They are not yet the intercessions of *my* spirit; I know not what I ask. But Thou knowest what I ask, O my God. Thou knowest the name of that need which lies beneath my speechless groan. Thou knowest that nothing but the river of *Thy* pleasures can ever satisfy my thirsty soul. Thou knowest that because I am made in Thine image I can find rest only in what gives rest to Thee; therefore Thou hast counted my unrest unto me for righteousness, and hast called my groaning Thy Spirit's prayer.

LXVI.

The Charity of the Spirit.

"Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost."—ROMANS xv. 13.

AND so the abounding in hope is a power of the Spirit, and evidence of advancement in the divine life. There are some who seem to think that the sign of spiritual advancement is the narrowing of hope. They look upon charity as something which the bad ought to have for those in the same condemnation. Yet Paul himself does not appeal to the bad as those most likely to hope for the fallen; he says, "If a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are *spiritual* restore." He knew well that only the springtime can yield the prophetic song of the swallows. He knew well that only the upper dawn can promise the illumination of the valleys. He had no belief whatever that winter would hope for summer, or that night would predict the meridian of the coming day. It was to the day itself that he looked for a

disclosure of the possibilities of heat and sunshine; the abounding hope in humanity was to be reached only through the power of the Holy Ghost.

God of hope, whose freedom from all impurity is the absence of all despair, I shall only reach the perfect charity when I come to Thee. Thou alone of all this universe hopest unto the end. We follow our prodigals afar off, and pursue their footsteps for a long time, but when they touch the country of the Gadarenes we lose sight of them and let them go. But Thou never losest sight of *Thy* prodigals—not even amongst the swine. There is no limit to Thy hope because there is no limit to Thy love. It is the limit to our love that makes *us* despair. When our brother becomes dead in trespasses and in sin, we put him out of our hope because we turn him out of our hearts. But Thou hopest even for Thy dead. Thy love is stronger than death. Thou goest down into the graves and sittest among the dry bones and criest "Awake thou that sleepest." Thou rollest away the stone that covers the sepulchre of poor humanity, and callest in Thy tenderest tones "Believe and live." Thou enterest where man draweth back; Thou searchest where man abandoneth; Thou strivest where man slumbereth; Thou redeemest where man

destroyeth. Thou findest germs in the grave; Thou discoverest sparks in the snow; Thou lightest stars in the night; Thou hearest songs in the silence. Thy love is evergreen, therefore Thy hope is eternal.

LXVII.

The Spirit's Solution of Mysteries.

"For the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God."
—1 Cor. ii. 10.

THERE are mysteries which are quite unfathomable to everything but love. Why should the good Father send so many crosses to His children? We look in a hundred directions for the answer and from ninety and nine the answer comes not. Eye hath not seen it; ear hath not heard it; imagination hath not conceived it. The crosses of life are the deep things of God, and thought cannot explore them. But love can; the spirit of love can interpret the acts of love. You want to know why the Father gives you pain; the memory of parental love will search out that depth for you. Did you never get pain as a direct gift of parental love? Did you never receive a task when you wanted an hour of play, or sigh within school-house walls when you

panted for green fields? Yet your fetters have become your wings; your tears have made your rainbow; your prison-house has led captivity captive. You would not part with that gift of pain for all the other gifts of your universe; it was a bondage that enlarged your soul.

Spirit of love, Spirit of the All-Father, Thou alone canst interpret the dark places that surround Thee. Only when I learn that this world is Thy school-house shall I find the vindication of its pain. I cannot penetrate the deep things of Joseph's dungeon except by the light of Thy Fatherhood; it seems so hard to see the vanishing of youth through the iron entering into the soul. But the education of Thy Fatherhood explains all. There is no gift of parental love like the iron of the soul—the strengthening of the inner man. It is love's brightest jewel given in its roughest casket. Thou canst not send it to me through the flowers of Eden; it can come only through the tears of Gethsemane. Thy gift of iron to my soul interprets its Gethsemane. It justifies the long dark night with its desertedness and its agony. It vindicates the withered palm-leaves, and the hushed hosannahs, and the fading of Jordan's morning glow. It explains the dropping of the curtain over that transfiguration glory which earth would fain interpret as the promise

of perpetual mountain heights. In the light of Thy love the valleys are themselves exalted; the deep things, the dark things are illuminated by Thee.

LXVIII.

The Mode of Discerning the Spirit.

"But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."—1 COR. ii. 14.

ND so there were Agnostics in Paul's day too! There were those who called themselves "natural men"—the men of the five senses. They refused to believe that anything was in the universe which did not come through these gates. And yet in that conclusion they were most unnatural. The largest part of what I call Nature never came to me through the five gates. Where did I get my idea of beauty? Came it from the hilltop or from the valley or from the plain? Nay, nor from anything without my own soul. Where did I get my sense of music? Came it from the vibrations of the air? All the vibrations in the world would not make one note of music; the kingdom of melody is within me. Where did I get my thought of natural law? Came it from the observations of science? Science

itself would have been impossible if that thought had not been born before it. It came from my own mind—from that sense of order which belongs to mind alone; I never could have seen it in the stars if I had not first felt it in my soul.

O Thou that comest not through the five gates, help me to discern Thee by Thine own light. Teach me that there are other gates than the five. Tell me that there are portals more golden than the eye or the ear. Once didst Thou call a disciple blessed because he saw in Thee what flesh and blood could not reveal. Be mine that blessedness for evermore. Enable me to see Thy glory beneath that form which was more marred than the sons of men. Help me to detect Thy majesty gleaming through the rent side and the pierced hands. Teach me to recognise Thine uplifting above the earth in the very hour of Thy humiliation upon the cross. Inspire me with the knowledge that Thou art a king in the very moment when Thou art discrowned by Pilate's judgment seat. Show me the power of Thy sacrifice, the glory of Thy shame, the strength of Thy gentleness, the empire of Thy love. When I have received Thine image in my heart nothing shall be so natural as the vision of Thee; when Thy Spirit of unselfishness is mine Thy beauty shall be spiritually discerned.

LXIX.

The Spirit's Recognition of Christ.

"No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost."
—1 Cor. xii. 3.

THE thought is a beautiful one. Paul says that all worship is participation in that which we adore. And verily he is right. Worship is the homage of the heart, and the heart can only pay homage to that which is already in it. If I admire the beauties of Shakespeare I must be myself a Shakespeare. However much I acknowledge his lordship over me I can only do so by reason of a kindred spirit; the light which shows him to be above me is his own light in me. I may be a mute inglorious poet; I may never be able to write a line in my life; never fit to give forth one note of song. But if my heart has thrilled to the accents of the Swan of Avon, if my soul has bowed down before the majesty of that which it instantaneously feels but could never have expressed, I have already the clear

and certain evidence that the germ of the same genius sleeps in me.

My soul, art thou seeking a test of whether thou hast the Spirit of Christ? Art thou desirous to know whether the life that dwelt in Him dwells in thee? Not long needest thou wait for an answer. There is a test for thee which is infallible, unimpeachable. Is Christ to thee an object of admiration? Does there rise within thee a thrill of rapture at the sound of His footsteps passing by? Does there wake within thee a flutter of the heart as His voice reaches thine ear? Does there vibrate within thee a chord of music as His accents fall upon thy way? Does there swell within thee an infinite longing to be like Him, to be near Him, to be one with Him? Dost thou feel thyself to be poorer than before, meaner in thine own eyes than ere He had crossed thy path? Then thou art already like Him, thou hast already His Spirit. Thou art like Him because thou seest Him as He *is*—beautiful. If thou wert not like Him it would be impossible for thee to see His beauty; thou wouldst be able to look only on His marred visage. But thou hast seen beneath the marred visage. Thou hast bowed before a glory not made with hands. Thou hast recognised a kingdom amid the emblems of the dust. Thou hast reverenced a lordship

hid in a servant's form. Thou hast detected a loveliness that concealed itself in the miry clay. Therefore thou art like Him; thou hast the impress of His image in thyself, for that which thou lovest is already half thine own. No man can say that Christ is Lord but by participation of His own Spirit.

LXX.

The Continuity of the Spirit.

"There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit."—1 Cor. xii. 4.

PAUL says that the Spirit of God must be everywhere or nowhere. It must not be something which is limited to one corner of a man's nature; it must run through the diversities of all his gifts. All his gifts must tend in one direction—the direction of self-sacrifice; this is that sameness of the Spirit which makes the most varied acts the acts of one religious life. Does it seem to thee an impossible thing that a man should be religious throughout—should be able to pray without ceasing? Nay, but thou hast forgotten the nature of religion, the nature of prayer; it is the giving up of thyself. And canst thou not give up thyself in everything as well as in one thing? Is the gift of song meant in the sanctuary for the praise of God and in thine own dwelling for the praise of thyself? Nay, is it not alike for God and man something

given to create joy? Are thy prayers in the house of God offerings to the Heavenly Father and thy wishes in thine own house offerings merely to this world? Nay, but thy wishes must themselves be prayers—golden desires that thy good may be the good of all. Are the contributions of thy hand in church to be dictated by the love of God and the contributions of thy intellect in the study to be dictated by the love of fame? Nay, but both must be consecrated on one altar—that service of humanity which is God's unconsuming fire.

Spirit of Christ, Spirit of the crucified One, let all my gifts be permeated by Thee. Let my reason be Thine; bathe it in the stream of Thy sacrifice that it may come forth seeking truth for itself alone, truth at any price, truth though it lead to martyrdom. Let my will be Thine; wash it in the fountain of Thy blood that it may come forth bound with that chain of love whose bondage is perfect freedom. Let my imagination be Thine; merge it in the ocean of Thy love that it may come forth filled with the ideal of Thy beauty. Let my heart be Thine; rest it with Thee on the bosom of the Father that it may come forth desiring nothing which Thou desirest not and loving nothing which is not loved by Thee. Let my manner be Thine; plunge it in the wave of Thy self-

forgetfulness that it may come forth sparkling with that grace which flows from unconsciousness alone. Then shall my whole life be religion; then shall my whole atmosphere be prayer; then shall my whole employment be service of Thee. My diverse gifts shall become gifts of the sanctuary when, O Spirit of sacrifice, they are baptized by Thee.

LXXI.

The Spirit's Gift of Counsel.

"To one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom."—1 Cor. xii. 8.

"THE word of wisdom" is equivalent to "the wise word"—the word spoken at the right time. Paul says that the power to do this can only come through the Spirit of Christ, in other words, through the sacrifice of my thought of self. How true this is! How many of the most splendid advices have failed in their effect just because before giving them I forgot to bury *myself*. Perhaps I was angry; perhaps I was indignant; perhaps I was supercilious; perhaps I was secretly gratified with the glory of being a mentor. And so I failed to be a mentor—failed for want of the Spirit. My word was not wise, because it was spoken at the wrong time, and it was spoken at the wrong time because I did not put myself in the place of my brother. I was thinking of myself—not of him; therefore I lost

the blessedness of the man who "bringeth forth his fruit *in its season*." I brought out my fruit of correction in winter when my brother was cold; it added to his bitterness and he rejected it with scorn. The Spirit would have taught me to create the springtime first around him, and to speak my word of wisdom when the singing of birds had come.

Spirit of Christ, help me to speak to my brother the word of wise counsel. It will never be wise until it is tender, and it will never be tender until it is prompted by Thee. Teach me that if a man be overtaken in a fault I must restore him "in the spirit of *meekness*," considering my own temptation. Enable me before I speak to clothe myself in his circumstances. Grant me the power to place myself in his surroundings, in his difficulties, in his struggles. Give me the strength to empty myself into his life, to say to myself, "Would I have done much better if I had been born under the same star?" Instead of marvelling that he is so bad, help me to see how much worse he might have been. Let me begin by bearing his burden before I ask him to bear my counsel. Then shall my counsel be tender because it shall be timely. It shall be as Thy voice was of old to the victims of their own sin. It shall keep back the reproof until the ravages of the past be

healed; it shall say, "Thy sins be forgiven thee" ere it shall consent to say, "Go and sin no more." My word of counsel shall be wise when, all-atoning Love, it is dictated by Thee.

LXXII.

The Spirit's Gift of Healing.

"To another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit."
—1 Cor. xii. 9.

ONE would think that the Spirit could have no connection with the gifts of an hospital nurse. The Spirit belongs to the sphere of religion; the gifts of nursing belong to the sphere of the physician. Yes, but the sphere of religion is everywhere; it includes the sickroom as one of its wards. What makes the difference between a good and a bad nurse is often just the possession of the Spirit. Two hands may be equally skilled mechanically; yet the touch of the one is soothing, the contact of the other is repellent. Why is this? It is because the one is the hand of the hireling who works to make a living; the other is the hand of the philanthropist who lives to achieve a work. The one is the touch that discharges an allotted task; the other is the contact that feels a kindred pain. The one is the helpfulness that is

mindful of favours to come; the other is the movement of a perfect self-forgetfulness which for the present is only conscious of the humanity which it succours.

Spirit of Christ, Thou whose glory it is to give Thy life for the many, help those whose lot it is to minister to the spirits in prison. Help those whose call it is to watch by the bed of sickness, to smooth the troubled pillow, to solace the couch of pain. Teach them that the art of ministration is the art of love. One day in Thy courts is worth a thousand days of mere outward learning; one touch of Thy pity is worth a thousand rules of mere worldly prudence. Give to those who tend the pains of humanity a deep sense of humanity itself. Let the suffering to which they minister be felt as their own suffering. Create within them that sympathy which makes sacrifice itself not sacrificial, because it makes us love our neighbour *as ourselves.* Inspire them with the thought that they are members of one body with those whom they succour. Let them feel that the limbs which lie racked upon the sick-bed are their own limbs, that the eyes which watch sleeplessly for the morning are their own eyes, that the hands which are folded in feebleness are their own hands. Then shall they have power, Thy power, the power of Thy love.

Then like Thee they shall bear away the infirmities from others, because like Thee they have begun by taking the infirmities on themselves, for their cross shall be the step to their crown and their power to suffer shall be their strength to heal.

LXXIII.

The Earnest of the Spirit.

"Given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts."—2 Cor. i. 22.

THE earnest of the Spirit is always in the *heart*; it is a *wish* to be good. The Spirit has tremendous heights before it—heights of knowledge, heights of action, heights of Calvary; but its beginning, its earnest, its springtime, is a simple desire. The bud from which the Rose of Sharon springs is a longing. The first gift of God to my soul is a sense of want, the feeling of an empty heart. It is the feeling of an empty heart that tells me I am more than the beast of the field. That which prophesies my greatness is not what I possess but the sense of what I do not possess. The earliest measure of me is the intensity of my cry. When the Spirit first came to me I only knew of its coming by my hunger. The only change of which I was conscious was a change from satisfaction into dissatisfiedness. The birds had lost the sweet-

ness of their song, and the fields the freshness of their green, and the days the lustre of their joy. The Spirit came with the clouds of heaven—came with a shadow to my heart. But the shadow was an earnest of coming light. What made the birds lose their song and the fields their green and the days their lustre? It was the glimmer of a glory above the brightness of the sun. My heart had caught sight of an aperture in the prison wall and thenceforth it knew it was in prison and panted to be free.

Son of man, my thirst for Thee is the herald of Thee. The earnest of Thy coming is the shadow on my heart. The shadow on my heart is *Thy* shadow; only by the *vision* of Thee can I learn my want of Thee. In the world of sense I can hunger before I have known the taste of food, but in the world of spirit I must taste before I can hunger. Therefore it is that my hunger for Thee is my earnest of Thee; I know by the craving of my heart that Thou must be at the door. It is the approach of Thy footsteps that has put everything else in silence. It is the music of Thy voice that has made all other things seem discord. It is the light of Thy countenance that has left the surrounding world in shadow. It is the vision of Thy moral beauty that has emptied my heart of

its treasures and made it vacant, cold. O eloquent silence! O harmonious discord! O luminous shadow! O vacant heart prophetic of an overflowing fulness! I will not fear to enter into that cloud, for I know, Thou Divinest life, that the cloud is an earnest of Thee.

LXXIV.

The Spirit's Abolition of the Law.

"Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."
—2 Cor. iii. 17.

WE say sometimes of a task we are learning, "I have not yet got into the *spirit* of it." We mean that it has not yet become easy to us. Nothing becomes easy to us until we have got into the spirit of it. The spirit of any study is its harmony with my spirit; it is the change of law into love. When I am a pupil at school I begin by learning rules, but when I have mastered the science I forget the rules. I forget them in the very act of observing them—keep them most perfectly when I am unconscious of their presence. I no longer think of my scales and exercises, I no longer think of my stops and intervals; these belonged to the days of law, but I am now under grace. The master-spirit of the musician has set me free—not free *from* the law, but free *in* it. I travel over the old scales and exercises, over the old stops and intervals, unconscious

that they are still on the wayside. I pass unnoticed the places of my former pain; I go through undisturbed the scenes of my youth's perplexity, for the spirit of music has made me free, and its law is most destroyed when it is most fulfilled.

So, Thou divine Spirit, is it with Thee. Before I have entered into Thee it is a hard thing to be divine; it is all scales and exercises, the law of my members wars against the law of Thy mind. Until Thou comest I am not at home in the holy places; the presence of my God is not fulness of joy. I am too anxious about the counting of my stops and intervals; I am too eager about the measuring of my moral distances; I am too disturbed about myself and my remoteness from the goal. But when Thou comest I forget everything but Thee. I forget even my own humility, my own rags, my own nothingness; in the presence of Thy love I am burned up with unquenchable fire. Thy love is the music of my religion; it puts me in the spirit of it. I no longer need to learn the separate notes of duty; I can play by the ear; I can improvise. I no longer count the number of times I shall forgive; my every act of forgiveness is for eternity. I no longer ask, "Am I *commanded* to follow Thee?" I say, "Lord, suffer me to go." I no longer cry, "I

must come to Thee or I shall go to hell," but I say, "It is hell without Thee; bid me that I come." Thou hast become my vital air; I breathe in Thee. Thy will is my joy; Thy work is my play; Thy law is my life; Thy service is my glory; Thy cross is my power; Thy command is my strength; the constraint of Thy love is my spirit's liberty.

LXXV.

The Spirit's Abolition of the Sense of Merit.

"Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?"—GAL. iii. 2.

WHAT Paul asks is really this, "Did the Spirit come to you through a sense of past attainment or through the sense of future expectancy?" "Did it come from the pride of work already done, or did it rise in the humble hope that strength would be given for work yet to do?" Let us try to understand Paul's meaning. What was your first proof that you had received the spirit of poetry? Was it when you looked back on the wretched verses of your boyhood and pronounced them very good? No; that was a proof that you had *not* the spirit of poetry. But it was when you stood before the judgment seat of John Milton and saw the books opened—the "Paradise Lost" and the "Comus" and the "Lycidas," when you

felt that in the blaze of their glory your own works were burned for evermore, when there rose within your humbled soul the hope that one day you might be allowed to catch some faintest far off gleam of that poetic vision, it was then and only then that the spirit of poetry was yours. You received that spirit when you found your past works to be vile.

Son of man, Thou hast robbed me of my glory. Before I saw Thee I was proud of my past works; my ideal was low and I was easily satisfied. But one day it was said to me "Jesus of Nazareth passeth by," and I went out to see Thee. I saw Thee by that vision of the soul which men call faith, and that instant I died. I fell to the earth broken and blinded and the rags of my self-righteousness were consumed by the brightness of Thy coming. Yesterday I strutted through the temple and cried, "Lord, I thank Thee that I am not as other men;" to-day I beat upon my breast and say, "Unclean, unclean; Lord, be merciful to me a sinner." And yet I am nearer to Thee now than I was then; I would not go back to yesterday. It is light and not darkness that reveals my distance from Thee. It is the rise of the Star of Bethlehem that tells me Thou art in advance of me, going on before. It is the height of my new ideal which prevents me from being

satisfied; it is the jealousy of my enlarging love that will not let me say "Well done." O Sun of Righteousness whose healing wings begin by overshadowing me, O spotless Lamb whose glory crucifies my pride, O Pearl of great price before whose flashing radiance my gold indeed is dim, the shadow and the cross and the dimness are all from Thee. It is Thy Spirit within me that has taught me Thy height above me; my despair of myself is born of faith in Thee.

LXXVI.

The Patience of the Spirit.

"For we, through the Spirit, by faith wait for the hope of righteousness."—GAL. v. 5.

THERE are times when things look very dark to me—so dark that I have to wait even for hope. It is bad enough to wait *in* hope; a long deferred fulfilment carries its own pain. But to wait *for* hope, to see no glimmer of a prospect and yet to refuse to despair, to have nothing but night before the casement and yet to keep the casement open for possible stars, to have a vacant place in my heart and yet to allow that place to be filled by no inferior presence—it is the grandest patience in all this universe. It is Job in the tempest; it is Abraham on the road to Moriah; it is Moses in the desert of Midian; it is the Son of man in the garden of Gethsemane. There is no patience so hard as that which endures "as seeing Him who is invisible;" it is the waiting for hope. I can wait for the meridian

when I get a glimpse of the dawn, but when the very dawn is invisible I would need a giant's faith. When I see the primrose of hope I can say "The summer will soon be here," but when the primrose of hope itself is faded, it is divinely strong to say "It will bloom again to-morrow."

Yes, divinely strong, for, O Spirit, the strength is Thine. Thou hast brought into this world a new order of heroes—the men who can wait. The heroes of the past were men to whom waiting was impossible, who rushed impetuously to achieve the impulse of the hour. But Thou hast created a new form of greatness, a fresh type of manhood. In Him, whom we call the *Son* of man, Thou hast exalted into a mountain what yesterday was a valley. Thou hast made waiting beautiful; Thou hast made patience divine. Thou hast shown us that the cup of sorrow may be accepted when there is no star in the sky. Thou hast taught us that the Father's will may be received just because it *is* His will. Thou hast revealed to us that a soul may see nothing but sorrow in the cup and yet may refuse to let it go, convinced that the eye of the Father sees further than its own. Give me this divine power of Thine—the power of Gethsemane. Give me the power to wait for hope itself, to look out from the casement when there are no stars. Give me the power,

when the very joy that was set before me is gone down, to stand unconquered amid the night and say, "To the eye of my Father it is perhaps shining still." I shall reach the climax of strength when I have learned to wait for hope.

LXXVII.

The Motive of the Spirit.

"Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh."
—GAL. v. 16.

IT is of no use to attempt the weaning from one joy except through another joy. The lusts of the flesh are pleasures; it is a shame that we need to say so, but it is true. How then shall we be cured of these pleasures? Paul says that we can only be cured of them on the principle of homœopathy—by creating a like desire in the higher parts of our nature; the lust of the flesh can be counteracted only by a longing of the spirit. How different are God's methods from mine; I am always seeking to heal badness by restrictions; I would keep my brother from evil by tying his hands. I forget that mere prohibition makes the heart beat quicker; the tree is never so dear to me as when a voice says "Thou shalt not eat." It is a fearful thing when the unclean spirit has gone out and the clean spirit has not yet come in; my house

then is left unto me desolate. Who shall remove the desolation? Who shall lift me out of these dry places where I wander and where I protest against my bereavement? Nothing can do it but a new love—no pains, no chains, no threats, no prisons; my restraint will be but the place of my torment from which I shall cry for water to cool my tongue. If I would forget the past, father Abraham, or some other ministering spirit must bring me the draught of a purer water, whereof they that taste shall never thirst again. If I would quench the lusts of the flesh I must walk in the Spirit.

Spirit of love, Thou canst set me free; Thou canst quench the thirst of my lower soul. I cannot keep my heart from evil by merely ceasing to think; if the door of thought be unguarded the unclean spirit will return. I want something to fill the vacancy; I want *Thee.* My eye has been long gazing on impurity and it will not be cured by being sent into darkness; lift upon it the light of *Thy* countenance and it shall be safe. My ear has been long listening to discord, and it will not be healed by being draped in silence; let it hear Thy voice upon the waters and it shall have melody evermore. My hand has been long raised in wrath against my brother, and it will not be redeemed by being put in chains; let it

be compelled to bear Thy cross and it will hurt no living thing. Come, Thou fire of heaven, and extinguish the fire of hell. Thy love can burn up all contrary loves. Thou art the only fire by which the bush of life is not consumed. The lust of the flesh weakens me, wearies me. But Thy burning makes me stronger day by day. It consumes my care but it preserves *me*. It destroys my selfishness but it magnifies *myself*. Like the three men in the fiery furnace I feel that a fourth power is added to me when, O Spirit, I walk in Thee.

LXXVIII.

The Fruits of the Spirit.

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance."—GAL. v. 22, 23.

WHAT a strange order do these fruits of the Spirit follow; I would have expected the crudes clusters to be at the beginning and the ripest at the end. But here the order seems to be the reverse; it appears as if the ripest came first and the crudest afterwards. There are three clusters on this tree of life. The earliest is the highest—the nearest to the sky; it is "love, joy, peace." The second is lower; it is nearer to the earth, and it has been affected by the earthly shadows. Exaltation has been succeeded by the need for self-restraint—"long-suffering, gentleness, goodness." The latest is the lowest of all; it has altogether touched the earth and is in full conflict with its shadows. The need for self-restraint has deepened into the necessity for self-renunciation, and the waiting called "long-suffering" has

become the storm and stress of battle—"faith, meekness, temperance." "O what a fall was there!" is our spontaneous cry. What a leap from love to temperance, from the glow of the heart to the mere holding in of the reins. Why has the summer come first and the winter afterwards? why have the fruits of the Spirit not followed the order of the year?

They *have*, my brother, thy last stage is here thy ripest. The love that can sing in the summer air is beautiful, but the meekness that can inherit the earth is more beautiful still. It is more beautiful because it needs more love. Canst thou sing in the summer air? it is well, but the lark can do the same. Thy Father demands of thee a love song more glorious than the lark's—a song that can ascend from the winter and the valleys. He wants a song that can rise up to Him from the snows of earth, from the mist, and the cold, and the depression of the life of common day. He wants a praise that can issue from hearts that have been tried by sorrow, a love that has been born not of sight but of faith, a psalm that has been "rolled to wintry skies" by lips that have been taught by restraining meekness to say, "Thy will be done." Wilt thou give Him this love? wilt thou send Him this song? wilt thou sing like the swallow in the cold ere yet it is more than

spring? Then shall the latest cluster of thy tree be the most glorious of all, then shall the last offering of thy life be the ripest fruit of the Spirit, for love on the earth is better than love in the air, and the rest of tempered meekness is better than the peace of innocence.

LXXIX.

The First Message of the Spirit.

"In whom, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise."—EPH. i. 13.

THE first gift of life to my soul is a promise. It is so with natural life. Its earliest consciousness is neither of to-day nor of yesterday, but of to-morrow. Its vision is that of streets paved with gold, of suns that never set and of days that never rain; it begins its youth where Moses began his old age—on the summit of Mount Nebo. The Spirit of *divine* life also begins with Mount Nebo; its first message to the heart is a vision of the promised land. Before it asks me to take one step of the journey it presents me with the grapes of Eshcol—the specimen fruits of the glory yet to be. It shows me the end at the beginning—shows it nearer than the reality. It conceals the intervening spaces—the brakes and briars between. It takes me out like Abraham below the stars and it says

to my proud spirit, "So shall thy seed be," but it does not tell me that betwixt me and the stars there intervenes that terrible hill of Moriah with its great ordeal of faith and its mighty surrender of will. It says, "Surely I come quickly," but it conceals as yet that it "cometh with clouds;" it hides the sword of crucifixion during the shepherd's song; it is the Spirit of promise.

O Thou beneficent Spirit, I thank Thee for this first message to my soul. I thank Thee that Thy first voice to me has been the voice not of warning but of promise. I thank Thee that my earliest vision has not been the cross of Calvary but the opened heavens and the descending dove. The journey is too long and too arduous to be encountered without good cheer. I need a draught of joy before starting; I want a stimulus of the heart to help me on. I would faint by the way if I did not get bread before leaving. Therefore, O Spirit, I bless Thee that first of all there has come the beatific vision, that Thou hast shown me the crown of glory before the crown of thorns. The brightness of Thy morning shall keep me all the day. It shall keep me through the cloud and the cold; it shall keep me mid the burden and the care; it shall keep me in the labour and the strife. It shall lift me up in the depression of the

valley; it shall hold me erect in the monotony of the plain; it shall make me calm on the billows of the sea. I shall walk aloft through the storm when I hear Thy morning song behind me, and the yoke of toil shall be easy when I remember Thy promise in the dawn.

LXXX.

The Unity of the Spirit.

"For through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father."—EPH. ii. 18.

AND so there may be a union amidst the utmost difference of views. What difference of opinion could be so great as that between Jew and Gentile; they were the poles of religious thought. Yet Paul says that in the sight of God these might be esteemed the worshippers in one common temple, "we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father." What is that one Spirit which in spite of diverse forms and features can make us in God's eye one family still? It is the life of sacrifice, of self-forgetfulness, of brotherhood; that is the Spirit of our Father. Paul says that if we have that Spirit we are Christians though oceans of thought lie between us. I may call myself a follower of Cephas, and you may call yourself a follower of Apollos, but if we have taken up the cross of the great Burdenbearer

there is in heaven's sight no more sea; we stand hand in hand before the judgment seat of Christ; through Him we both have access to the heart of the Father.

Spirit of the cross, Spirit of the Son of man, let our rival sects and parties be united in Thee. We are postponing our union until we come into the unity of the faith; that is not Thy method. Thou callest us to the unity of love—love in spite of intellectual difference, love independent of contrary opinions. My brother and I cannot agree about the name we should give to Thy light; may we not shake hands without such agreement? Is not Thy light beautiful called by any name, called by no name? We are agreed about Thy beauty and about the love of Thy beauty; unite us in that love. Unite us in the love for man as man, in the sympathy for those wants which are universal because they are human. Unite us in the sorrow for the sorrowful, in the heaviness for the burdened, in the perplexity for those that have lost their way. Unite us on the road to Galilee, on the mission to the valley of the shadow of death. Unite us in the pity for the poor, in the distress for the desolate, in the help for the homeless, in the succour for the sinful. Then can we afford to wait for the unity of the faith. Then can we postpone our differences about the name we shall

give to Thy light, for Thine unnamed light shall itself be our guide, and the glory of its sacrificial flame shall lead us both into the presence of the Father.

LXXXI.

The Seat of the Spirit.

"Strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man."
—Eph. iii. 16.

PAUL'S great solicitude is for the *inner* man; if he can only get *that* strengthened he feels that his work is done. And he is right. The inner man is the metropolis, the capital, the chief city; all the provinces take their tone from there. No man must begin with the provinces if he wants to make his fortune. In vain you adorn the body, in vain you amass the gold, in vain you seek the sights and sounds of beauty; the capital is the heart, and if the fashion of the heart be sombre, the whole is sad. But if the fashion of the heart be bright, I have no fear for the provinces; these will soon follow. The body may be meanly clad, the gold may be scarce and dim, the sights and sounds of beauty may be shut out by lane and alley, but if in the heart there be voices of laughter, they will fill all the land. If there be songs in the metropolis, I shall not

be able to keep down my singing. I shall sing through all the provinces; I shall sing in the cold and in the snow; I shall sing in the dark and in the rain; I shall sing amid my struggles for daily bread. The life of joy is everywhere when there is gladness in the inner man.

Therefore, Thou divine Spirit, I come to Thee. I want to have my youth renewed within—at the heart. I know that the heart should be ever young, but mine is old; and because my heart is old the whole tree of life is withered. Often have I pondered these words of Thine, "If the salt have lost its savour, wherewith shall *it* be salted,"—if the *heart* be old, if the principle of youth itself be withered, what can make us young? Thou, O Spirit, Thou canst give me back my youth; Thou canst restore my soul. The pastures are as green as ever, the waters are as quiet as of yore, but the withering of my soul has robbed them of their morning's glow. Renew the sunshine of my heart; renew the childhood of my spirit. Give me back the freshness of the inward Spring—the buoyant expectation of to-morrow, the quenchless hope of the good time coming. Restore me the elastic bound that sorrow could not keep down, the lightness that burdens could not crush, the ardour that coldness could not cool. Then shall the pastures

grow green again; then shall the waters ripple peace once more, for the new creature shall make the new creation, and the restoration of the soul shall be the restitution of all things. My strength shall be renewed like the eagle's when Thou has strengthened my inner man.

LXXXII.

The Grief of the Spirit.

"Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God."—EPH. iv. 30.

IS then grief a divine thing? I thought it was something for the slave—a mark of frailty, a sign of poverty. Nay, but there is a grief which can only belong to rich natures, which is incompatible with the poor and mean. There is a sorrow which can only be felt by love—a sorrow which increases as a man grows in love. There are tears which divine communion wipes from the eyes, but there are other tears which it causes to gather there. Love, divine love, lifts me into a new pain—its own pain. It makes me sensitive to impressions of sadness from which yesterday I was free. It shows me coldness where I felt nothing but warmth, darkness where I saw nothing but light, deadness where I witnessed only the pulsations of life. It reveals spots in the sun, stains in the snow, impurities in the fountain, discords in the lark's song. It lays

on me as on my Lord the burden of human sin, and it tells me by a kindred experience that He grieved *because* He was divine.

Spirit of the Holiest, whose perfect love opens Thy heart to the greatest sorrow, let not *me* add to Thy grief. Thou hast wounds enough to bear without receiving one from me. It is divine in Thee to suffer, but it is undivine in me to *make* Thee suffer. Instead of grieving Thee, could I not help Thee to bear? Is there no work that we might do together, are there no labours that we might perform side by side? Is there no sorrow of Thy heart which I could make a sorrow of my heart? Is there no interest in Thee which could become my interest? Is there no care in Thy life which I might be permitted to call my care? I am told that I am to be a sharer in Thy *gladness*, "Enter ye into the joy of your Lord." But is not Thy joy just the redemption from Thy grief? Thy joy is humanity redeemed; Thy grief is humanity in chains. How shall I rejoice with Thy laughter if I do not weep with Thy groaning; how shall I reign with Thee if I have not first suffered with Thee? I shall be made glad with Thy rapture according as the days have been wherein I have been afflicted with Thy sorrow; let me not grieve Thee but share Thy grief.

LXXXIII.

The Supplications of the Spirit.

"Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit."
—Eph. vi. 18.

PRAYING always with all prayer;" one would think the command was unqualified. Yet it is not. I am not to ask everything indiscriminately. There is a limit within which my desires are to wander. I am not to be allowed the answer to "all prayer," but to "all prayer in the Spirit." The man of science tells me that I must not ask anything that is at variance with the law of nature. The order of the Spirit is the law of *God's* nature, and it is an absolute law. I must not seek to change it, I dare not desire to violate it, for it is without variableness or the least shadow of turning. The order of God's Spirit is the law of love; to pray in God's Spirit is to desire in conformity with love. If I ask that which is not conformable to God's nature, I am like the child that cries for the

moon; I want to put asunder what God has joined together. The overture to all prayer must be "Thy will be done;" no man can sing the song of supplication who has pitched his voice upon a lower key. My Father measures distance not by space but by sympathy; my voice shall He hear in the morning if I ask "in the Spirit."

Lord, teach me to pray. Teach me that form of prayer which marks the boundaries within which I may ask of Thee. Teach me to desire that by which Thy name shall be hallowed, to seek that which shall hasten Thy Kingdom, to wish that which shall be consistent with Thy will. Teach me before all things to say "*our* Father." I sometimes forget that I have a brother, forget that he has wants common with my own. I sometimes lose the remembrance that the satisfaction of my want may mean the impoverishment of my brother; I say, "Give *me* this day *my* daily bread." Restore to me, O divine Love, the memory of Thy cross. Restore to me the fading sense of Thy kingdom, Thy power, Thy glory. Remind me that Thy kingdom is service, that Thy power is sacrifice, that Thy glory is humanity redeemed. Revive within me the sympathy that feels another's pain, the charity that weaves another's hope,

the love that participates in another's joy. Let me cease to thank Thee that I am not as other men; my prayer shall become Thy prayer when I shall ask through Thy Spirit.

LXXXIV.

The Fellowship of the Spirit.

"If there be any fellowship of the Spirit, fulfil ye my joy."
—PHIL. ii. 1, 2.

AND so Paul's ideal of joy was fellowship. He did not wish to be a recluse, a hermit, a solitary dreamer; he wanted to be a man of society. The world has claimed a monopoly of the social element; it offers the youth what it calls good-fellowship. Why, that is just Paul's word, just Paul's offer. "The fellowship of the Spirit;" what is that but good-fellowship—the fellowship of goodness? Paul is impressed with the analogy between the good-fellowship of the world and the fellowship of the saints: "Be not drunk with wine," he cries, "but be ye filled with the Spirit." What does he mean? is there any connection between them? Yes; they are both forms of self-forgetfulness. Wine lifts me out of my care and causes me to laugh with others; the Spirit also lifts me out of my care and

makes me a companion at the feast. God's wine, like the world's wine, drowns the darkness of my past, but it drowns it not in oblivion but in glory. It shows me the vision of a past redeemed—of dross transmuted into gold, of evil made to work for good; it lifts the weight from my soul and makes me comrade to my brother man.

O Thou who settest the solitary in families, help me to break the loneliness of my own soul. That which makes my soul solitary is the weight of its past remembrance. I am no companion for others, because I am in communion with my own cares. Hast Thou an elixir of self-forgetfulness? Hast Thou a potion that can set me free without degrading me? Hast Thou a remedy for care which can destroy the care without killing the life? Yes, Thou and Thou alone hast such a cure. Thy Spirit can give me rest—rest from myself. Thy Spirit can lift the burden from the door that prevents my brother from entering in. Send me Thy Spirit, O my God. Take away the depression that makes me seek the shade. Give me the lightness of heart that craves companionship, the joy that longs to tell itself, the buoyancy that cannot be alone. Give me that need for brotherhood which disencumbered souls alone can feel, that joy in human intercourse which only hearts at

rest can know. Apart from Thee I have been wandering in a solitary way, but the days of good-fellowship shall come when I have received Thy Spirit.

LXXXV.

The Love of the Spirit.

"Who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit."
—COLOSSIANS i. 8.

"LOVE in the Spirit," what is that? It is the only thing worth having in human affection. It is the love the of inner as distinguished from the love of the outer man. There is a love which is not spiritual; it rests on the beauty of the form, and with the beauty of the form it fades away. It comes to the Son of man when He is feeding the multitude with bread, but it leaves Him alone under the shadow of the Cross. But spiritual love is impervious to shadow. It comes not because the leaves are green, and therefore it goes not when the leaves are seared and yellow. It pays its homage to the soul *as* a soul—sees its royalty amid rags, detects its greatness amid ruins. It will find the Son of man in the dark and cold of the sepulchre and anoint Him there with the myrrh and aloes. It will find the

apostle of the Gentiles in the meanness and degradation of a Roman dungeon and will recognise in him a perfect beauty though his bodily presence were weak and his speech contemptible. Well might Paul reverence that form of devotion which he calls "love in the Spirit."

"Love in the Spirit," be this, O Lord, my love for Thee. Let me love Thee for what Thou art, not for what Thou givest. There are times in which Thou givest nothing. There are seasons in which we tarry in the wilderness all night and have no bread. Why dost Thou not always multiply the loaves? It is because Thou longest to be loved "in the Spirit," loved for Thyself alone. Let me abide with Thee in the desert when there is no bread. I came to Thee when Thou wert loading me with benefits; let me stay with Thee when Thou hast taken Thy benefits away. I came to Thee when the multitude cried "hosannah;" let me remain with Thee after they have shouted "crucify." I came to Thee when Thy way was strewn with palm-leaves; let me linger with Thee when Thy brow is wreathed with thorns. Teach me to feel that the wilderness *with* Thee is better than the garden without Thee, that famine by Thy side outweighs plenty where Thou art not near. Then shall I know the

peace that passeth understanding—the peace which the world cannot take away. The loss of Thy gifts will not break my joy when I have learned to love Thyself—to love Thee in the Spirit.

LXXXVI.

The Quenching of the Spirit.

"Quench not the Spirit."—1 THESS. v. 19.

THERE is a thirst which ought not to be quenched—the thirst for God. It is like no other thirst in the world. Other thirsts are quenched when they meet their object, but the thirst for God will be quenched if it does *not* meet its object. When the hart pants after the waterbrooks its panting is allayed by tasting of the waterbrooks, but the panting of my soul for God is kept alive by tasting of God. If I do not taste of God I shall cease to thirst for Him; the Spirit will be quenched. Why is it written, "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness"? It is because in the spiritual world it is the rich and not the poor that hunger. It is because the aspirations of the soul, unlike the wants of the body, are created by the things that feed them, increase with our abundance and intensify with our fulness. To allay *that* hunger is to become poor; to still that

craving is to grow destitute; to quench that thirst is to sink into a pauper's grave.

O Thou for whom I pant as the hart panteth for the waterbrooks, keep alive the thirst of my soul. Thy Spirit in me is my thirst for Thee; let me not quench that Spirit. I fear to lose the thirst for Thee through disuse of Thee. I fear that the craving may subside by abstaining too long from the living waters. Bring me to the waters, O my God. Let me drink once of the river of Thy pleasures—not that I may thirst no more, but that I may thirst no more for any lower thing. Not to lose the desire of Thee do I come to Thee; I come to have it deepened. I have read of a worm that dieth not and of a fire that is not quenched; but I know a fire that is not quenched where the worm *does* die. It is the fire of Thy love, my Father, the insatiate longing of my heart for Thee. Only in that endless flame shall the worm of my care be made to die; only in that mighty thirst shall the power of all other thirsts be allayed. The worm of my care comes back because finite joys grow dim; it shall be consumed for evermore in that joy whose every height reveals new heights to come. I shall find peace from my own torments in that fire of Thine which cannot be quenched.

LXXXVII.

The Sacrifice of the Spirit.

"Who through the eternal Spirit offered himself."
—HEBREWS ix. 14.

FFERED Himself through the Spirit;" surely a strange mode of sacrifice. I would have expected it to have been said that Christ offered Himself through the pains of the flesh. Nay, but in God's sight this was not His offering. The deepest part of His sacrifice was invisible; it was the surrender of His will. The gift which He presented to the Father was not His pain but Himself—His *willingness* to suffer. What the Father loved was rather the painlessness than the pain. He delighted not so much in His sacrifice as in the joy of His sacrifice. It was offered "through the Spirit." It was not wrung out from a reluctant soul through obedience to an outward law; it came from the inner heart—from the impulse of undying love. It was a completed offering before Calvary began; it was seen by

the Father before it was seen by the world. It was finished in the spirit ere it began in the flesh—finished in that hour in which the Son of man exclaimed, "Not as I will, but as Thou wilt." Man had to see the pain of His body; God was satisfied when "He poured out His soul."

Even so, my brother, is it with thee. There are times in which thou art impotent for all outward work, times in which thou canst offer no bodily sacrifice. Thine may be the path of obscurity; thine may be the season of penury; thine may be the road apart from the world's highway. Thine may be the delicate frame that cannot run for God because it must rest for sustenance; there may be nothing for thee to do but to look on and wish that thou couldst serve. Yes, but canst thou do *that?* Is this wish indeed thine? Then thy Father sees thy sacrifice completed. It is not yet offered in the body, but it is offered "through the eternal Spirit." Like the sacrifice of Abraham it is accepted in its inwardness. Thou hast brought up thy gift to Mount Moriah and hast laid it there before the Lord—laid it open in thy heart, uncovered on the front of thy bosom. Thy Father sees it there and holds it already given. He accepts the offering of thy will as an offering of thy gift. He asks not the blood of Isaac

when He has seen the blood of Abraham. He counts thy faith unto thee for righteousness, thy devotion unto thee for deed, for He knows that the sacrifice which lags behind in the flesh has been offered already in the eternal Spirit.

LXXXVIII.

The Penalties of the Spirit.

"He that despised Moses' law died without mercy, under two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment shall he be thought worthy, who hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace."

—HEBREWS x. 28, 29.

THE thought is that there is no penalty so great as the punishment inflicted by the Spirit. If I am only convicted by outward witnesses, if I do not feel the pain from within, it is only my body that suffers. But if I am convicted by the witness of my own heart, if I am confronted by the stings of a violated conscience, my punishment is sore indeed. There is no pain like spiritual pain; there is no spiritual pain like the sense of having done wrong. If I have outraged the law of love in my own soul, it is no solace to me that there are not outward witnesses of my deed. It is no consolation to me that eye hath not seen it, that ear hath not heard it, that visible tribunal shall not avenge it. It is the reverse; if I could only get outward punish-

ment it would be a relief. Why have men in all ages sought penance? Why have they wounded themselves, lacerated themselves, starved themselves? It is that thereby they may avert the greater penalty—the stroke of a wounded conscience. Not by accident is it written that the first punishment was not physical. Why is no man suffered to kill Cain? It is to teach the world at the beginning that the penalties of the Spirit are in God's sight heavier than the penalties of the Law.

My soul, is there any escape for thee? The stroke of the outer law was sharp but it was shortlived; one brief pain and all was over. But the remorse for deeds misdone: can there be any end to that? Yes, there can. There is One who has been coming up behind thee, lifting the crosses thou hast left by the wayside. There is One who has been gathering thy misdeeds into His kingdom and making them work for good. There is One who has been not only forgiving thy past, not only cancelling thy past, but atoning for thy past. The crosses left by thee on the wayside have not merely been lifted, but have been beaten into the steps of a golden ladder on which the world instead of stumbling shall rise; the dungeon thou madest for Joseph has become the road to his

throne. Wouldst thou have thy past unspoken? Wouldst thou have thy deeds undone? Wouldst thou have the sense of being a child again—with the page still to write, the race still to run, the road still to traverse? Come then to Him who crucifies thy misspent years. Come to Him who beats thy sword into a ploughshare, thy spear into a pruning hook. Come to Him who maketh the wrath of the wicked to praise Him. Come to Him who turns the water of the past into wine and tells thee thou art born anew. The penalties of the outraged Spirit shall be crucified on the bosom of the Son of man.

LXXXIX.

The Sanctification of the Spirit.

"Through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ."—1 PETER i. 2.

THERE are two stages of sanctification —the obedience to Christ and the sprinkling with the *blood* of Christ. That is ever the order of the Spirit. We begin with compulsion from without and we end with impulsion from within; we begin with imposed service and we end with sacrificial love. So was it with the man who wrote these words; Peter was drawing from his own experience. There was a time when he thought the stage of obedience was the only stage. "Bid me that I come to Thee on the waters," he cries; he thought that the virtue of the act lay in the struggle it would cost him to do it. "How oft shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him?" he wanted an arithmetical command which he could count and keep like the books of his fisherman's craft And his Lord gave

him a command which was not arithmetical—the sprinkling of the blood. He gave him His own spirit of sacrifice, His own love of humanity, His own necessity to give *Himself*. Henceforth, it became impossible to count the commands of duty; the sprinkling of the blood means love and the demand of love is infinite. It is not measured by numbers; it is not bounded by precepts; it is not defined by statutes; it is not compassed by laws. Its measurement is life; its requirement is the whole life; its boundary is the end of life; its climax is the fulness of life; it is exhausted only in the sprinkling of the last blood.

O Thou Divine Spirit, that hast led this world over the face of the waters into the haven of peace, lead my soul from the tossing of enforced obedience into the rest of a surrendered will. Sprinkle me with the blood, the sacrificial love of Jesus. Give me His divine necessity to suffer—the necessity of love. Impel me to bear my brother's cross by obedience from *within*, by submission to the dictates of the pitying heart. Translate me into the new bondage—the bondage that makes me free, the golden chain of love. Lift me into the new service—the service that makes me master, the devotion to a pure desire. Raise me into the new law—the law that makes me dead to force

and fear, the liberty of a spirit whose will is Thy will. I shall help my Lord to bear His cross when I have passed from outward obedience into the sprinkling of His blood.

XC.

The Test of the Spirit's Abidingness.

"And he that keepeth His commandments dwelleth in Him, and He in him; and hereby we know that He abideth in us by the Spirit which He hath given us."—1 JOHN iii. 24.

[I have ventured to alter the punctuation both of the Authorised and of the Revised Version.]

THE most beautiful thing to St. John was abidingness. Peter was a man of gleams and flashes; he liked to walk upon the waves. But John's ideal of happiness was lying on the bosom; he was a man of the even way, a man of rest. He valued not the momentary flash; he trusted not the instantaneous gleam; he wanted an abiding calm for morning, noon and night. And he said that he had found it; he professed to have secured on the Master's bosom a place for ever. What was his evidence for this bold claim? How did he know that Christ was abiding in him by that Spirit which He had given? Was it by the increased power to rest? No; strange to say, it was by the increased power to work.

He says that his evidence for the Spirit's rest is the strength he gets for unwearied action; "He that keepeth His commandments dwelleth in Him." The Spirit's permanence is proved by its activity; the Spirit's rest is recognised by its waking; the Spirit's calm is vindicated by the storms that sweep over it in vain. Only he that lieth in Christ's bosom is able to compass Christ's work; only His Spirit's rest will help me to keep His commandments.

My soul, has Christ become to thee an abiding Spirit—a principle of inward rest? How shalt thou know it? Shalt thou go with the Brahman into the wilderness to make thyself still? Shalt thou retire with the hermit into the solitude to avoid the strife? Shalt thou repair with the mystic into the cloister to be free from noise? That would not be a test of Christ's Spirit; other spirits as well as His can abide there. It is not in the stillness but in the thoroughfare that thou must prove the permanence of His rest, "*He that keepeth His commandments* dwelleth in Him." Wouldst thou know the permanence of His presence, the abidingness of His rest? test it by the struggles of the common day. Test it by thy courage in danger, by thy fortitude in temptation, by thy strength in conflict, by thy calm in storm, by thy patience in sorrow, by thy gentleness in

rebuke. Test it by the justice of the forum, by the integrity of the counting-house, by the unity of the family circle, by the brotherhood of human souls. Test it by thy power to do the right in a world where men do the wrong —to be stable amid the wavering, to be steadfast amid those that succumb. Then shalt thou have a test which the hermit never knew, for there is nothing but inward rest that can stand the outward fight; hereby shalt thou know His indwelling, if thou canst keep His commandments.

XCI.

The Test of the Spirit's Genuineness.

"Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God."—1 JOHN iv. 2.

THE test of any spirit's genuineness is my power to feel its presence in the lowliest things; the true artist proves himself by the detection of hidden beauties. Even so, St. John says, the test that I have the Spirit of God is my power to feel His presence in the dust. To confess "that Christ has come in the flesh" is to love the divine in its garb of humiliation. It is to penetrate beneath the disguise and say, "Thy speech bewrayeth Thee." To confess His beauty in the heavens does not require so pure a spiritual artist; spirits less finely touched are able to do that. But to confess Him "in the flesh," where there are no stars and systems, no thunderings and lightnings, no flashings and gleamings, where every suggestion points to frailty and impotence and death—that is to

be God's artist, that is to see the King in His beauty.

O Thou who art the altogether lovely, give me for Thy beauty an artist's soul. Give me the power to see that beauty even where it tries to hide itself. Give me that exquisite perception of Thy loveliness which can detect Thy loveliness even amid the forms of the commonplace. Help me to confess Thee "in the flesh"—in the disguise of that which is not beautiful. I have recognised Thy presence in things above me; I have seen Thee in the firmament; I have worshipped Thee on the mountains; I have traced Thy footprints in the tread of empires; in these Thou art a God that *revealest* Thyself. But there are things beneath me as well as things above me; there is poverty and squalor and toil and weariness and death. And Thou art there too, O my God; there Thou art a God that hidest Thyself. Be it mine to detect Thy hiding-place and unmask Thee. Be it mine to discover Thy beauty sleeping in the grass, Thy glory hidden in the dust. Be it mine to track Thy warmth beneath the snow, Thy light below the shadow, Thy life amid the grave. Be it mine to see Thy presence in struggle and in sorrow, in labour and in ladenness, in Galilee and in Gethsemane. Then shall I know that I have an artist's soul for Thee and

that the beauty by which I see Thee is Thine own beauty; I am partaker of Thy Spirit's loveliness when I have learned to worship it "in the flesh."

XCII.

The Test of the Spirit's Absence.

"These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit."—JUDE 19.

WHAT a strange use of the word "sensual!" I commonly limit the term to bodily excess; to St. Jude that is only a symptom. The disease to him lies deeper—lies in the mind. He says that the sensual men are the men "who separate themselves"—the men who deny the claims of human brotherhood. And truly he is right. There would be no sensuality in the world if there was love of man for man. Could the drunkard impoverish his household if he had not first killed his heart? Could the voluptuary wither the flower of innocence if he had not first abjured his race? No man was ever sensual till he became selfish—separated himself from sympathy with his kind. The test of the Spirit's absence is the prodigal's wish to live

alone. I do not begin my life of riot until I have got into the far country. It is when I forget that humanity is a continent that I begin my life of waste. It is when I forget that in God's sight "there is no more sea," that I become fit for the sustenance of the swine. *My* spirit cannot live on an island and be one with God's Spirit, for the Spirit of God is brotherhood, and brotherhood is the continent of souls.

I am weary of my island life, O Spirit; it is absence from Thee. I am weary of the pleasures spent upon myself, weary of that dividing sea which makes me alone. I look out upon the monotonous waves that roll between me and my brother, and I begin to be in want; I long for the time when there shall be no more sea. Lift me on to the mainland, Thou Spirit of humanity, unite my heart to the brotherhood of human souls. Set my feet "in a large room"—in a space where many congregate. Place me on the continent of human sympathy where I can find my brother by night and by day—where storms divide not, where waves intervene not, where depths of downward distance drown not love. Then shall the food of the far country be swine husks; then shall the riot and the revel be eclipsed by a new joy—the music and dancing of the city of God.

When I have entered the gates of the city I shall bid farewell to the wilderness; when I have received Thy bond of brotherhood I shall separate myself no more.

XCIII.

The Spirit in Patmos.

I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day."—REV. i. 10.

WONDERFUL triumph of love!—to keep even in Patmos the spirit of Sabbath rest. He was not only "in the Spirit," but he was "in the Spirit on the Lord's Day"—the Spirit in its deepest repose. But what a strange repose was that! It was rest amid storm. The Spirit that overshadowed him was brooding over the face of the waters. It was an hour of darkness, an hour of chaos, an hour of desolation—yet he found rest, Sabbath rest. How can we explain this? Is there any key to the mystery of St. John's peace in storm? Yes; we find it on the very threshold, "Behold, He cometh with clouds." All the clouds of this world are to him Christ's coming; that is the secret of his calm. However dark life be, however stormy it be, however desolate it be, he feels that the darkness and the storm and the desolateness are steps of

Christ's coming, and that in this light one day "every eye shall see Him." It is that which keeps the seer of Patmos calm—the knowledge that the Christ is here now, and that to-morrow He shall be proved to have been here. Above the sound of the trumpets, above the outpouring of the vials, above the voices and thunderings and lightnings of human calamity, there floats ever in his ear the resistless music "the Lord God omnipotent reigneth."

O Spirit, let me too hear that music, that even in Patmos I may have the Sabbath rest. Clouds and darkness are round about me; trumpets are sounding, seals are opening, vials are outpouring their draughts of bitterness. But all these are Thy chariots, O my God; Thou makest the clouds Thy chariots; Thou *comest* with clouds. May not I rest in Thy chariot of clouds as Elijah rested in Thy chariot of fire? May not I ascend to heaven by the same means wherewith Thou descendest to the earth? Why should I not even in Patmos keep my Sabbath? My love will not be perfected until it can keep its Sabbath there. I want to be able to hear Thee moving on the face of my waters; I want to be able to know Thee behind my cloud and care. Mine is a poor Sabbath if it does not come after the chaos; mine is an unfinished love if it has

never lived in Patmos. I am not satisfied till I can say of my love "it is finished." I am not content till I can hear Thy footsteps in the storm. I have not reached the summer of my soul until I can meet Thee in the clouds of heaven and say of these clouds "It is the Lord's day."

XCIV.

The Nature of the Spirit's Rest.

"Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."—REV. xiv. 13.

WHAT a strange contradiction: I would have expected the words to be "they rest from their labours and their works do *not* follow them." Ah! but I forget that this is the *Spirit's* rest, "Yea, saith the Spirit." When the Spirit says "yea," I enter into work just because I lose the sense of labour. The Spirit's "yea" is love; it is the consent of the will. It is where my love is weak that my labour is most burdensome and my work most incomplete. But when I enter into the Spirit's "yea," I enter into a rest that makes me strong; I forget the sense of toil, I fly over the ground, I bound across the fields of duty. The rest of the Spirit is always followed by action. When I lie down on the bosom of God I wake up to my own energies. Why does the Son of man

say, "I must work the works of Him that sent me"? Why, indeed, but because He "is in the bosom of the Father." Think you that He could have borne so much outward toil if it had not been for His fulness of inward rest? Nay; it was the rested soul that made the active frame; it was the stable will that made the moving power; it was the waveless heart that bore upon its ocean breast the burdens of the world. His spirit had ceased from its labours; therefore His works followed Him.

My brother, art Thou in times of sorrow longing for the rest of the grave? God desires no such rest for thee. The rest of the grave is for a body; a soul must have the rest of the Spirit. Thinkest thou that death is to be a cessation of work? Nay; but only of labour. That which makes thy life a toil is not thy work but thy weariness. If thou couldst only cease to be tired, thy works would follow thee everywhere. God offers thee in death not less work but work more abundantly—work that achieves more because it feels no strain. "There shall be no night there"—no sense of reaction from the burden and heat of the day. Thine shall be the blessedness, not of sleep, but of waking, not of dreams, but of doing, not of apathy, but of feeling. Thine shall be the blessedness of love—the action of the heart. Thine shall be the

blessedness of ministration—the labour of love. Thine shall be the blessedness of having one will with the Divine—the state in which service is identical with liberty, and where obedience becomes the freeman's vital air. Thou shalt resume thine abandoned works when thou hast attained the Spirit's rest.

XCV.

The Rapture of the Spirit.

"And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God."—REV. xxi. 10.

AND so we have Pisgah moments still! There are times of inward rapture in which I am quite carried away—caught up to meet the Lord in the air. Like Moses I stand upon a great and high mountain, and the desert is forgotten and the promised land is near. I could not live but for these glints of sunshine. When the night is very dark and the desert is very dreary, I say to myself, "Remember what you saw on the mountain; you will come out of the desert; there is a city somewhere." And verily I am right, my mountain moments are the test of what I shall be. It matters not how seldom they come; if they came only once, they would still predict the compass of my wings. Sometimes in the early year you can hear but the note of a single bird, and all the rest is silence.

Yet the bird and not the silence is the coming reality; a little while and nature will take up the song and be song altogether. Even so is it with my mountain moments. My songs may be few, but they are few because the year is early; they and not the silences are the realities of the ripening hour. A whole lifetime in the desert is outweighed by one sight of the city of God.

Spirit Divine, in whose presence is fulness of joy and at whose right hand there are pleasures for evermore, send into my spring premonitions of the summer gold. Send me in advance "days of heaven upon earth"—days of warmth above their season, days of sunshine brighter than their time. I have known Thee in Thine hours of conflict moving on the face of the chaotic waters. I have known Thee in Thine hours of calmness descending dove-like on the banks of Jordan. Am I not to know Thee in yet one stage more—Thy stage of overflowing joy? The struggle with chaos is noble; the peace of Jordan's dove is beautiful; but hast Thou not moments in which Thou transcendest even these? Hast Thou not moments in which my soul is "carried away," transported, surprised out of itself? Hast Thou not moments in which the Baptist outruns the Messianic age and tells me beforehand

of the glory that shall be revealed, when the desert dwindles into a span and eternity alone is real? Such moments I ask of Thee. By these and not by its shadows shall I measure life. Mount Ararat was dry when all beside was flooded, but Mount Ararat was the reality and all beside was vanishing away. When Thy sunlight touches the summits of the mountain I know that ere long there shall be light in the city too.

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